

PS3 IN OZ! THE FIRST KILLER GAME TO BE MADE IN BONDI!

PS3

50
PREVIEW
PAGES

■ play on world australia ■ issue #016

EXCLUSIVE PREVIEW PLAYTEST

MEDAL OF HONOR RISING SUN

WRC 3
Plus Rally Roundup

**LOTR: RETURN
OF THE KING**
Scorching preview

TRUE CRIME
Overthrowing Vice City

PS2 ONLINE
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JAK II
Reviewed

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PS2 Online

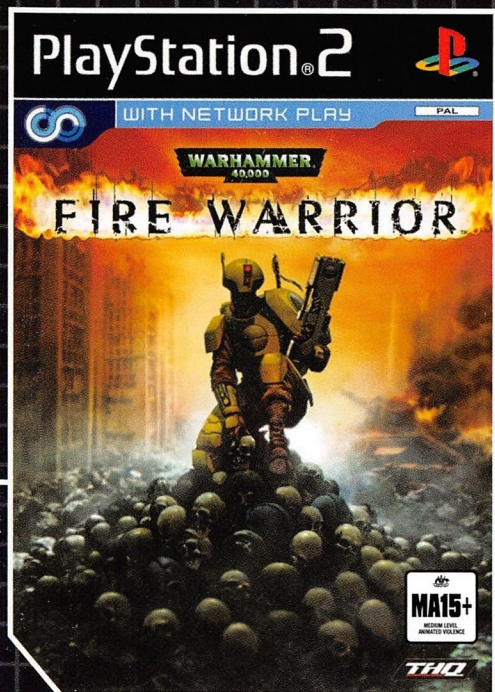
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- Gamespy



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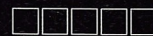


072

JAK II Gosh! A games character with attitood. Nice game too.

PSW CONTENTS

ISSUE 16



034 LOTR ROTK Yeah, it's Gandchop's play-a-long...



052 SWAT GST Proving it's still part of Australia's political agenda.

010 GLOBAL

PLAYSTATION HANGS THREE IN BONDI

016 GLOBAL EXTRA

GT4, XIII, HER MAJESTY PRO EVO 3 AND MORE

026 DIALOGUE

027 WIN!

TWO BIG WIRELESS GIVEAWAYS! AND MULTITAPS! ...!

PREVIEWS

028 TRUE CRIME: STREETS OF LA

034 LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING

038 ONLINE LIVING

042 CELEBRITY DEATHMATCH

044 RESIDENT EVIL OUTBREAK

046 MEDAL OF HONOR RISING SUN

052 SWAT GST

056 BEYOND GOOD AND EVIL

060 WRC3

064 CASTLEVANIA: LAMENT OF INNOCENCE

066 NFL STREET

068 SSX3

REVIEWS

WE SCAMPS HERE AT PSW OFTEN, THAT IS, JUST NOW, WONDER WHY THE 'REVIEW' SECTION IS NOT SIMPLY CALLED THE 'VIEW' SECTION. OR, AT LEAST, IF THE REVIEW SECTION MUST REMAIN THE SAME, THEN MAYBE PREVIEWS SHOULD BECOME 'REVIEWS'.

072 JAK II: RENEGADE

076 JUDGE DREDD

080 XGRA

082 TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2004

083 BREATH OF FIRE

084 ALTER ECHO

085 BUFFY: CHAOS BLEEDS

086 THE KING OF ROUTE 66

087 NHL 2004

088 MADDEN 2004

089 REVIEW ROUNDUP

089 PLATINUM REVIEW: KINGDOM HEARTS

068

SSX3
SSXy lass that.

FEATURES

THEY'RE OUR FAVOURITE PARTS OF THE MAG. HECK, JUST LIKE LAST MONTH, WE LIKE TRUE CRIME AND OUR ONLINE GUIDE SO MUCH THEY'RE IN BOTH THE FEATURES AND PRE-VIEWS SECTION CONTENTS. EXCEPT LAST TIME IT WAS ANOTHER TWO GAMES. GT4 WAS ONE I THINK. AH YES, AND MANHUNT.

028 TRUE CRIME INTERVIEW

WE HIT UP PRODUCER CHRIS ARCHER TO GET LOWDOWN ON THE INSIDES OF TRUE CRIME: STREETS OF LA.

038 A [ROUGH] GUIDE TO ONLINE GAMING

WE'RE WAITING TO BRING A MORE POLISHED GUIDE NEXT MONTH, WHEN MORE THAN JUST SOCOM IS PLAYABLE.

090 RALLY GROUP TEST

SURE, WRC3'S COMING, AND COLIN'S KING, BUT THIS MONTH WE TAKE A LOOK - MAKE THAT AN EXTENDED GAZE - AT THE PS2'S BEST RALLY RACERS.

BROWSER

ALL THE STUFF THAT JUST DOESN'T WANT TO FIT ANYWHERE ELSE!

090 GROUP TEST

WE LOOK AT RALLY GAMES ON PS2. THEY'RE QUITE A POPULAR GENRE NOW.

094 PERIPHERAL REVIEW

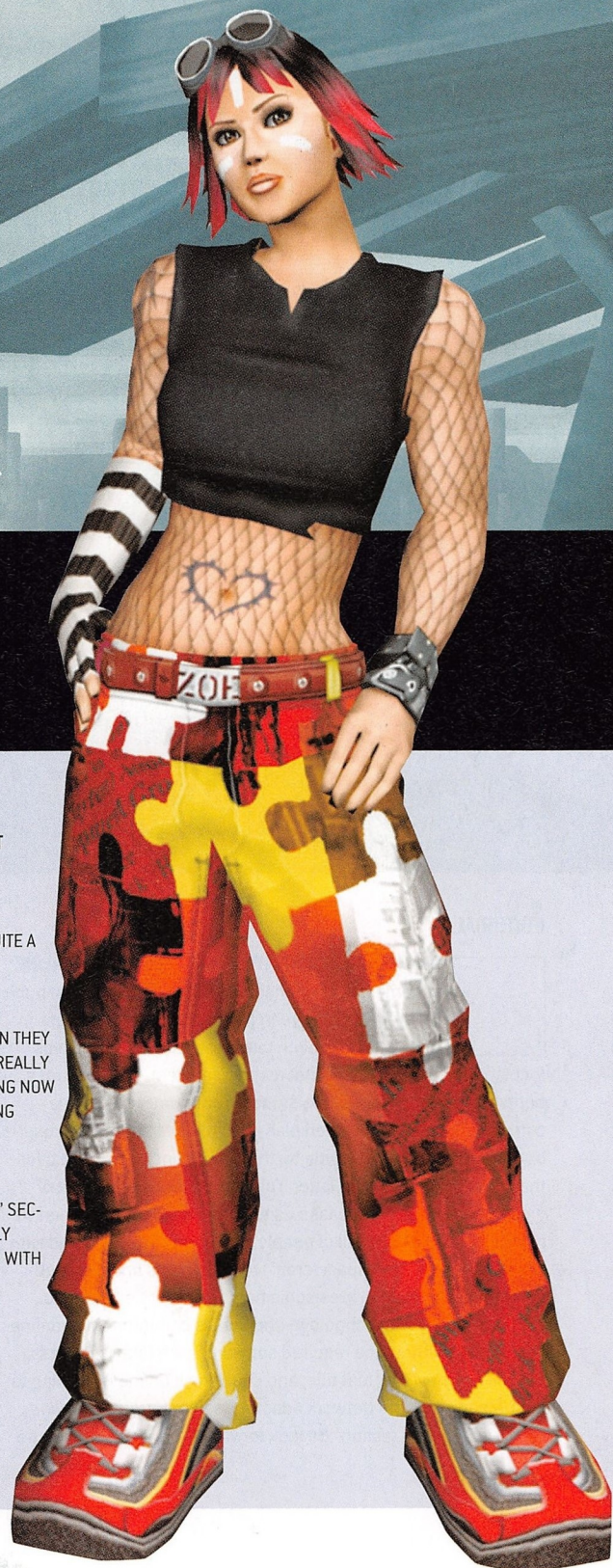
WIRELESS CONTROLLERS ARE COMING. BUT CAN THEY KICK THE DUAL SHOCK 2 OUT THE DOOR? NOT REALLY NO. THERE, THAT SAVED YOU A PAGE OF READING NOW DIDN'T IT. NO NEED TO THANK US. WE'RE WRITING MILDLY HUMOROUS FILLER AFTER ALL!

096 COVER DVD DETAILS

PREVIOUSLY UNDER THE 'COVER DVD DETAILS' SECTION HERE IN THE CONTENTS, WE HAD A FAIRLY LAME GAG ABOUT THE PS2'S VAGINA. ENOUGH WITH THE FLUFF.

098 NEXT MONTH

HA! SQUIRRELS!



PSW WELCOME



MEDAL OF HONOR It's looking boom-tastic. Check it on page 46.

EDITORIAL

ONLINE. SCARY, ISN'T IT? BY NOW SONY'S PS2 ONLINE

scheme has been made available to the general public, dropping the green flag on the future's biggest test yet. We've been talking about online consoles for bloody years: this is the first mainstream test. Can hope for a better world prevail, or will the stubborn consumer see online compatibility as a funny alien planet, a little bit like, say, Venus, but without the love? Judging by the current lineup of games, for the moment we'd say the latter. You see, we need some sort of great shiny space-craft to take us to this new world. And, when we get there, it's got to be full of people, and green, and lush, and with lots of fun parks. This 'space-craft' I refer to in this finely crafted metaphor in, in fact, an irresistible broad appeal title. Certainly, PSW has faith in the technology and Sony's commitment to online gaming, but without the required software, such faith is useless. *SOCOM* was never a great title, and chucking it online isn't going to help. Meanwhile, the Network Adapter freebie, *Hardware: Online Arena*, is free for a reason. We look forward to playing some of the

EA titles online, like *Rising Sun*, over Christmas, but it's not until 2004 that it will really heat up, with *Gran Turismo 4* and *Resident Evil Outbreak* (hopefully) leading an army of games designed specifically with multiplayer in mind.

Xbox Live – a dirty word? I don't think so. The PS2's position is comfortable enough in the short-term (excluding, for a moment, any consideration of medium-term brand penetration) that the money Microsoft are channeling towards Xbox Live offers certain nice associated benefits for the PS2. Videogaming means PlayStation, and any interest in the online sparked by Live promotions will easily rub off on the massive PS2 install base in Australia. If Microsoft can normalize consoles online, then PS2 owners are still going to benefit. Online as a games' standard? It could happen (although, whether we'd want it is a whole other editorial – next month maybe?).

But back to reality for a moment: from where is our spaceship going to come Sony?

/ JACKSON GOTHE-SNAPE

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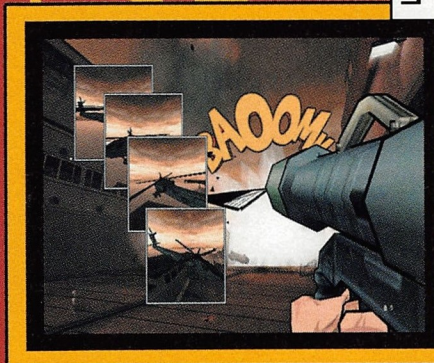
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XIII

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PlayStation 2



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PlayStation®2

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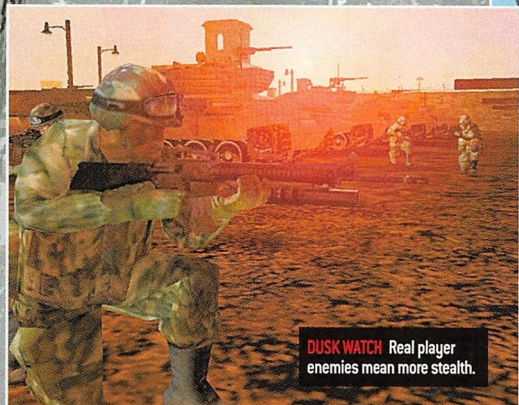


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JUNGLE FEVER

GHOST RECON GOES ONLINE

GET JUNGLE FEVER AS GHOST RECON REPORTS BACK FOR DUTY.

IF BROWN IS THE NEW BLACK THEN JUNGLES ARE THE new military compounds. For where last season the fashion was for shooters set indoors under the harsh strip lighting of faceless slate-grey high-rises, this season it's all lush green undergrowth, long grass and dangling, snake-like vines. *Ghost Recon: Jungle Storm* is the latest shooter to wander down the well-beaten path through the heavy foliage, following closely in the footsteps of *Metal Gear Solid 3*, *Medal of Honor: Rising Sun* and *Killzone*.

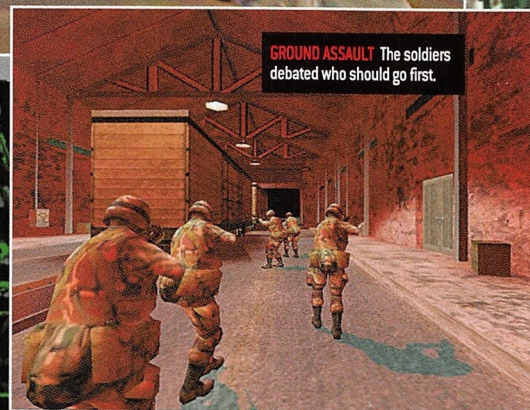
This time the jungles are Cuban and Columbian and the year is 2009. You command a unit of Green Berets sent in to remove a (we presume) cigar-chomping Columbian drug lord, who is attempting to seize power following the death of Fidel Castro. The single-player campaign is made up of 16 missions – eight in Columbia, eight in post-Castro Cuba – and stays faithful to the core components

of the original *Ghost Recon* released on the PS2 earlier in the year. Which means you can expect to be co-ordinating team assaults, field-testing high-powered military technology and swearing. Heavily and often. Suffice to say, if previous experiences with *Ghost Recon* games are anything to go by, you shouldn't come expecting an easy ride.

The perkier of *Jungle Storm*'s many new features is the Online mode that fully supports the USB headset, thus allowing you to bark orders at your team-mates from hundreds of thousands of miles away. Ubi Soft has hinted that *Jungle Storm* will feature three all-new multiplayer modes, taking the final tally up to ten, plus an online tracking system that will monitor your performance and give you an overall ranking within the *Ghost Recon* online community. We've also been promised more than 30 brand new maps, an improved

control interface and a standard of cut-sequence that'll cast shadows over anything we've seen before.

If the popularity of the Xbox version of *Ghost Recon* is anything to go by (they've been playing it online for months and they won't stop going on about it), *Jungle Storm* could well be the game to catapult the broadband adapter to mainstream success. Those of you who point to the last *Ghost Recon* game and say, "Yeah, but wasn't that just a slightly suspect conversion of the PC original? Won't this one be more of the same?" are informed that *Jungle Storm* is being designed specifically for the PS2, meaning things should run a lot smoother this time around. Check back with *PSW* next month for an exclusive first look, both in the magazine and on the DVD. You what? Get away. You don't need to buy us a present to thank us. We're just doing our job.



GROUND ASSAULT The soldiers debated who should go first.

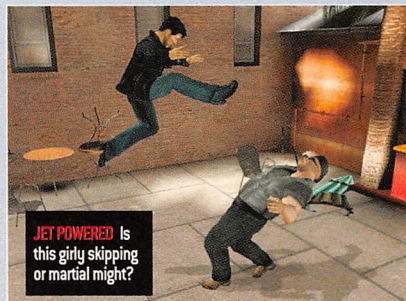


BAD SNARE DAY You step out for a morning walk and... Holy Moly!

JET LI LANDING

KUNG HO

TRIPLE KICK YOUR WAY THROUGH HONG KONG'S MAFIA MINIONS IN RISE TO HONOUR



FINALLY SONY HAS COME CLEAN ON WHAT IT'S BEEN cooking with martial arts star Jet Li. *Rise to Honour* is a slap fest set in the centre of Hong Kong which casts Jet Li as bodyguard Kit Yun. Rather than a film license, *Rise to Honour* is an original story based on a kind of younger, more hip Jackie Chan tale. Kit Yun discovers that guarding his dangerous boss isn't easy and once the mafia don sleeps with the fishes, Kit heads out for revenge and decides to take on every crime gang in Hong Kong. Plenty of henchmen, gun totting hitmen and kingpins are waiting to feel the thunder of Jet Li's trademark flying kicks and rapid punches.

Sony has included familiar slow motion 'bullet time' effects, which allow bullet-evading leaps and increased accuracy when using two pistols simultaneously. While the scraps are based around hand-to-hand combat, there's a chance to steal weapons and use part of the scenery to batter evil criminals. Drain pipes, barrels and the odd Glock provide Kit Yun with all ammo he needs to put his feet up and use his arms instead. Jet Li's moves have been captured perfectly, but still *Rise to Honour* won't be released until next year, leading us to ask ourselves whether Kit Yun can face the might of *True Crime*'s martial arts cop Nick Kang? Expect a full preview next issue.



FAIR DINKUM

PS3 COMES TO BONDI

PLAYSTATION 3'S FLAGSHIP TITLE SET TO BE DEVELOPED IN SYDNEY'S EAST.

DETAILS OF THE FIRST PLAYSTATION 3 TITLE IN development have leaked out, and PSW has traced the source to our very own city of Sydney. In recent university presentations at both Sydney University and the University of Newcastle, Brendan McNamara, formerly producer of *The Getaway*, revealed details of what promises to be one of the PS3's headlining launch titles, tentatively titled *L.A. Noir*. In addresses to software engineering students advertising the games industry career path, McNamara revealed his new studio, Team Bondi, will be recruiting up to 100 of Australia's finest programmers, designers and artists.

Why would the man credited for much of the success of *The Getaway* want to ditch a career in London? The weather? Nope. McNamara's partner has recently given birth to twins, and he desperately wanted to raise them in Australia. While few details both about the studio and game are concrete, and due to non-disclosure agreements, McNamara cannot reveal too much yet (we'll have more next month), reports from the presentations suggest the game will be set in 1940s or 50s Los Angeles, in the heyday of American hard-boiled crime fiction. Team Bondi have begun researching the city as it appeared in the era, by visiting libraries and museums in California, ensuring the highest possible level of authenticity.

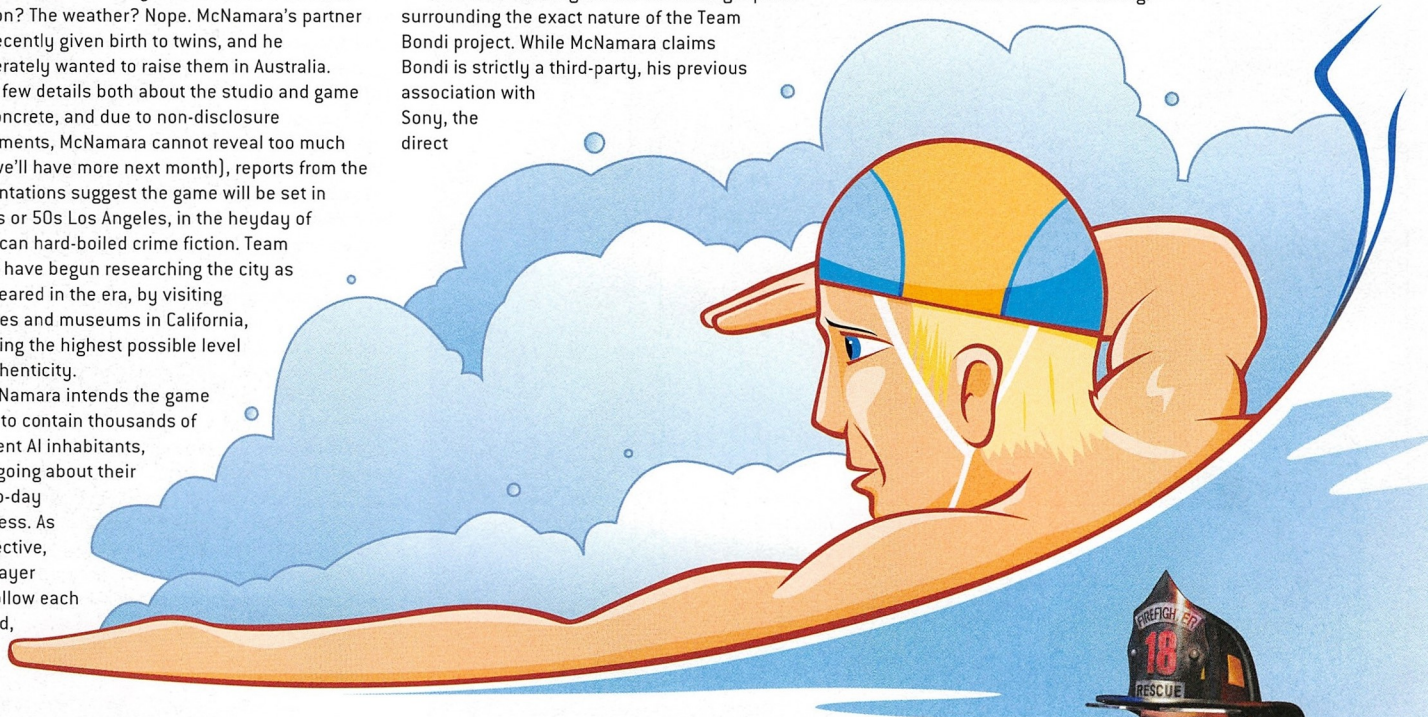
McNamara intends the game world to contain thousands of different AI inhabitants, each going about their day-to-day business. As a detective, the player can follow each around, and

supposedly realistically interact and converse with them. McNamara, as highlighted by the filmic emphases of *The Getaway*, is a known promoter of the cinematic flavour in games, and promises that *L.A. Noir* will challenge Hollywood's finest in terms of visual quality and plot depth. Of particular interest is a proposed 'flashback' feature, where players can instantly access previous experiences to piece together clues. Of course, much of this is early developer optimism speak, as the project has only just begun, but depending on the power of the PS3 and the resources McNamara has available, such claims might not ultimately seem so far fetched.

What is interesting are the conflicting reports surrounding the exact nature of the Team Bondi project. While McNamara claims Bondi is strictly a third-party, his previous association with Sony, the direct

PS3 discussions, as well as rumour that financial aid was provided by Sony themselves suggest strong ties between the studio and Sony exist. Certainly, we won't be expecting any Xbox titles coming out of the place.

Further mystery has been created by the disappearance of McNamara and his presentation from November's Australia's Game Developers Conference. While, a month ago, he was set to present on a title 'to be announced' on the Saturday of the conference, the website seems to have scratched his name and studio, leaving only a suspicious 'TBA' in its place. Speaking to the conference's organisers, they have confirmed that due to his high workload setting up Bondi, he will be unable to present. What's happening down at Bondi then? We'll be sure to keep an eye out for this one. Expect more news next month. This could be big.



BURNING ISSUE

BLAZE OF GLORY

FIGHT FIRE WITH... LOTS OF WATER IN FIRE FIGHTER FD: 18

WE'RE LOOKING FORWARD TO KONAMI'S *Fire Fighter FD: 18*. It's an upcoming third-person action game that has you taking on the role of a firefighter in a huge city, running around hazardous environments and trying frantically to rescue victims before they're frazzled.

Don't expect to be taking on any human adversaries – it's strictly fire you'll be fighting, but you'll be equipped with an axe to break down obstacles as well as a variety of hoses to put out flames, and even your own personal water supply to put out fires in hard-to-reach locations. Backdrafts, explosions

and debris will all be par for the course, and the fire effects are already looking impressive. You'll have to run like hell to avoid flashovers – that's when the atmosphere gets hot enough to ignite literally everything that will burn, causing immense destruction.

Constant smoke means you'll have to rely on your map for guidance, and the game aims to get your pulse racing by forcing you to make split-second decisions in the midst of burning chaos. There's a secret arsonist at work who's setting ablaze some of the city's most impressive



buildings, meaning you'll get to do your thing in *Towering Inferno*-style skyscrapers and even on board a luxury yacht as you work with a female reporter to find the killer.

We won't see *Fire Fighter* until early next year, but as you can see, it's already looking scorching hot.





GREEN AND MEAN Make sure you watch out for crocs!

RAW

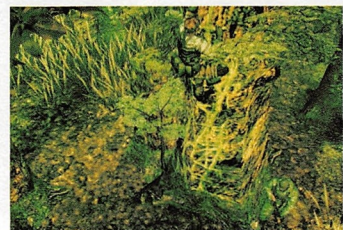
KING OF THE JUNGLE

TRAPS AND CROCODILE HATS FACE THE NEW SOLID SNAKE AS MGS3 ENTERS THE FOREST.

METAL GEAR SOLID CREATOR HIDEO KOJIMA FLEW INTO LONDON last month to address the PlayStation Experience bash held at Earls Court. In between the whooping, clapping and autograph signing, Kojima unveiled a brand new *MGS3 Snake Eater* trailer.

The video shows Snake entering bat filled caves with only a flaming torch for company. Snake also gets caught in a trap, hoisted up by his legs and left dangling among jungle trees. According to Konami, you'll have to pay attention to the shadows of enemies and become even stealthier than before. Konami also hinted that the traditional control method has been significantly overhauled and mentioned there is an emphasis on fist to face

combat. The trailer showed Snake disarming enemies and stabbing soldiers who had been knocked to the ground. Alongside all the merciless killings, it's clear that *MGS3* isn't all about back stabbing and starving to death in the jungle. The trailer sees a bird land on a sleeping crocodile which turns out to be Snake wearing a croc suit! To top off the shocking revelations, a Shirley Bassey-style song brings the action to a *James Bond*-esque climax. Imagine *Goldfinger* performed with the chorus featuring the words 'Snake Eater'. We shit you not. *PSW* will have the exclusive trailer next month.



PSW'S 10 MOST WANTED



1. METAL GEAR SOLID 3

We've seen the trailer and we're very excited. You can shoot animals, stab people in the throat and dress up as a crocodile. Jon Brown has purchased a croc suit, complaining his Solid Snake wet suit is "so last season".

2. GRAN TURISMO 4

Rocketing up the Most Wanted chart thanks to the unveiling of sexy Le Mans cars and some lovely Italian courses, we'd rather take *GT4* for a spin than steal a Mazda RX8.

3. MOH: RISING SUN

Joff admits he's in love with the old-fashioned weapons, saying, "It's the way they feel - it's almost organic." He said organic.

4. KARAOKE STAGE

After dancing [and singing] like loons recently, we proved that *Karaoke Stage* rocks. We sang along to the tongue-twisting acoustic flows of *One Week* by the Barenaked Ladies and mumbled about Chinese chicken.

5. TRUE CRIME

It'll be ready for November, just in time to compete with the *GTA3* and *GTA Vice City* double pack from Rockstar. But *GTA* doesn't have Snoop or Ice T. Fo' shizzle, dizzle.

6. GHOST RECON: JS

Developed just for the PS2 and looking all the better for it, *Ghost Recon* looks like topping *Conflict: Desert Storm II* as the best military assault simulator.

7. EYETOY GROOVE

Nutter loves anything to do with the *EyeToy*, especially new games. *EyeToy Groove* will keep him amused for months. A rare smile surfaced when we told him about the new arrival.

8. KILLZONE

It's ages away from release, but it looks great. The best thing to come out of the jungle since *MGS3*. We'll show you how great *Killzone* is next month with exclusive DVD footage.

9. MAFIA

Mafia-based killing sprees are good fun, but lack the strategy employed by *Mafia*. Think like a criminal without getting arrested? Sounds good to us.

10. DRIVER 3

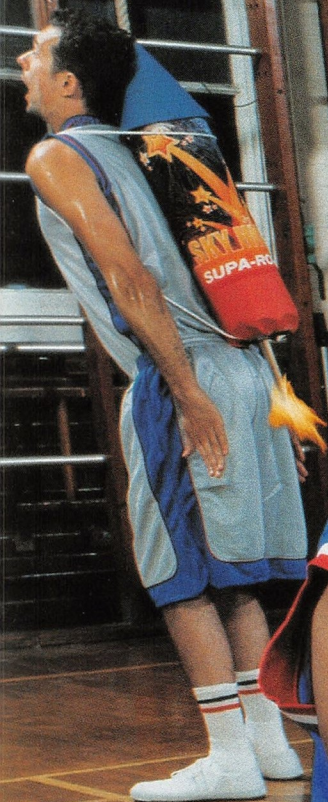
Do you want to become Tanner once again and make the mean streets clean? Of course you do, boss. Expect more next month!



NBA JAM TRAINING CAMP

DAY

5 4



SOME ARE BORN GREAT-SOME TRY HARD

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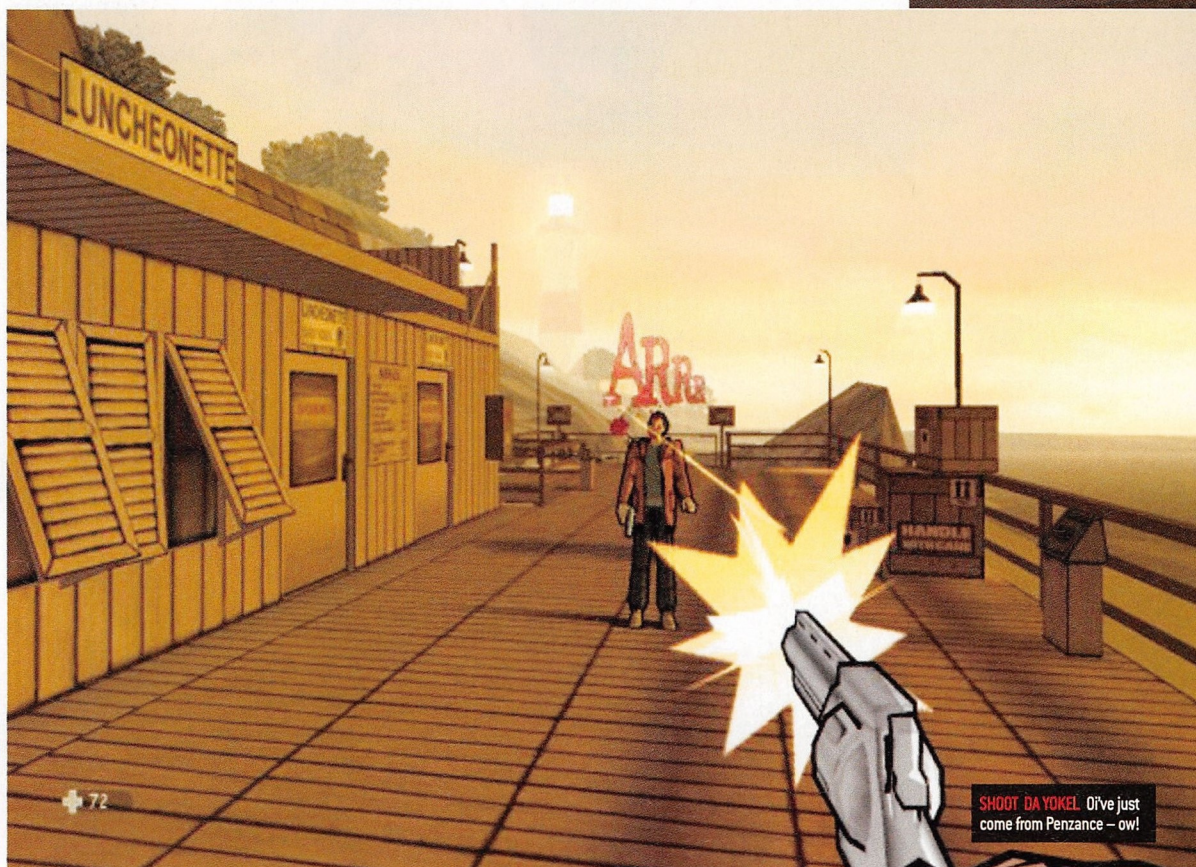
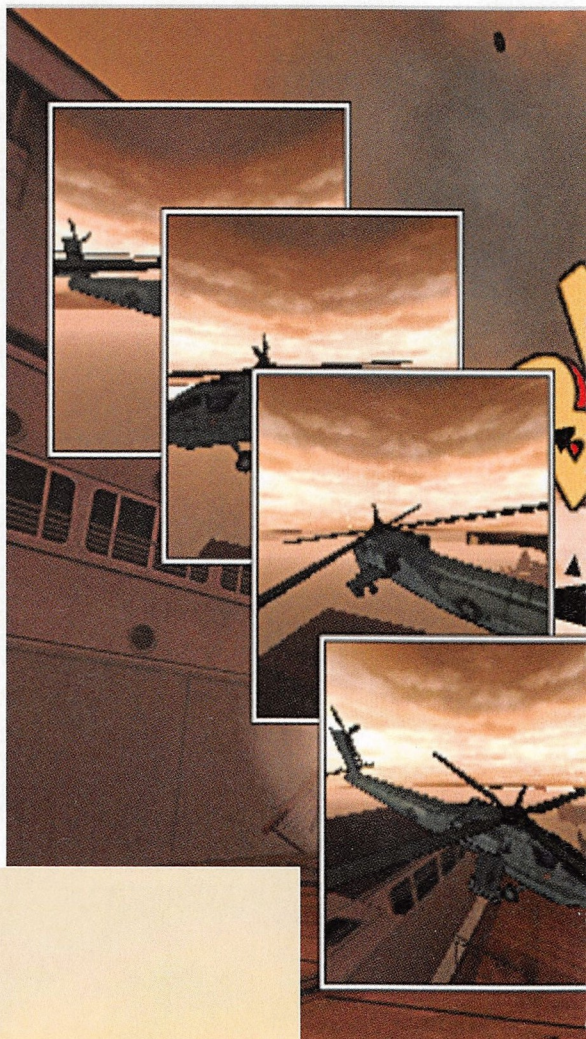
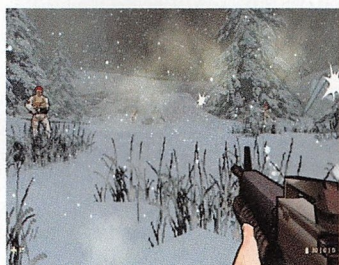
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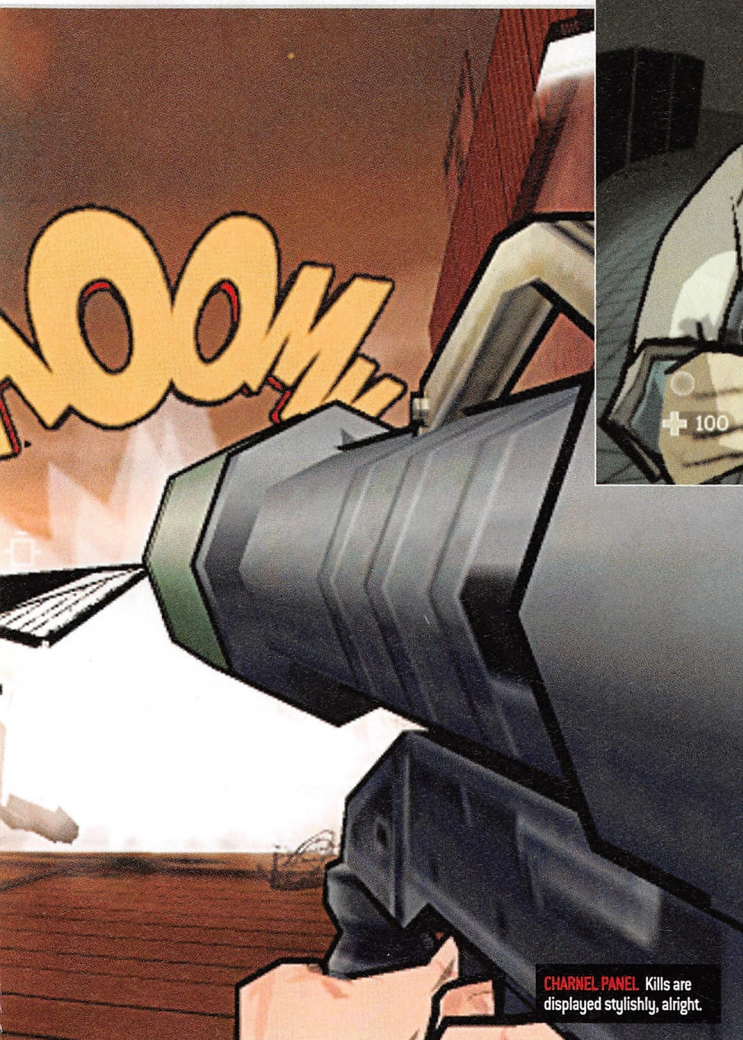


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GLOBAL EXTRA >>

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CHARMEL PANEL Kills are displayed stylishly, alright.



DRUGS DO WORK Wobbly screens = mad drug effects.



MAN HANDLED That's not you — that's your human shield.



PARDON? At last a game for the hearing impaired.

XIII



THERE'S NOTHING "COMIC" ABOUT THE SHOOTING IN HERE. WELL, OKAY, WE LAUGHED A BIT, BUT ONLY BECAUSE WE'RE HUGELY UNNATURAL SADISTS.

> **PUBLISHER** UBI SOFT
> **GENRE** SHOOTING
> **OUT** NOVEMBER

IF YOU'VE BEEN A GOOD, DECENT REGULAR PSW reader, you'll already recognise *XIII*. If not, shame on you! Shame on you for some being kind of black-hearted traitor to the cause of PlayStation gaming! Ahem. Never mind, gentle reader, we'll introduce you to the world of *XIII* right now. It goes something like this: you wake up on a beach somewhere in the dead centre of nowhere, with an aching head and no memory of recent events. Suddenly, you're assaulted by all manner of FBI types. Unshaken, you fight your way out of there and straight into a shooter filled with tension, paranoia and lots of cartoon-style killing.

Well, comic-book killing to be precise, as *XIII*'s based on a French graphic novel (apparently). We've been hammering away at our early version of *XIII* a lot lately, and we're pleasantly surprised at how playable it's turned out. There's a great selection of weaponry, including all manner of normal objects like chairs and pipes. Hell, you can even use dead enemies as human shields, or shoot your would-be assassins through the head with a harpoon. There's a definite adrenaline-tinged you-versus-the world feel to *XIII*, especially as *X-File*-r David Duchovny and original *Batman* Adam West have now been confirmed to supply the voices. That makes *XIII* technically the most deadpan game ever. Of course, we won't know just how good the game is until we get our hands on a finished version. Read the full-on review next month...

PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 3

NOT QUITE OVER THE MOON, BUT IT'S GETTING THERE.

> PUBLISHER KONAMI
> GENRE FOOTBALL
> OUT NOVEMBER

WE'RE NOT ENTIRELY COMFORTABLE with the new *PES3*... but it's growing on us. It's like trading in an old pair of slippers for a new pair with more cushioning and non-slip soles that won't have you smashing your pelvis on the damp kitchen floor; you know it's for the best, but something about it just doesn't feel right. *Pro Evolution Soccer 2* was practically part

of the family. We certainly spent a lot more time with it than we did with our relatives. So is it any wonder we have trouble saying goodbye to the old fella?

But as we become more familiar with the improvements in *PES3*, we're learning to love it. Just the other day we chipped the ball over an on-rushing defender and slid it neatly past the keeper. You couldn't do that before. And we can't do it again, because we've since forgotten how to. But that's just one of many cool new things you'll find in *PES3*. Start counting the days.



CHICKEN RUN The keeper laid a beautiful round egg.



DANCING BOYS Las Ketchup had refined their skills.



NEW TRICKS Every day, we hone our touch at *PES3*.



GET UP You lazy sod, and try to stop him scoring.



LOW SPIRITS Bring them into the real world to kill 'em.



PIXEL IMPERFECT This machine held the ghosts.



GET RID OF PESKY PHANTOMS WITHOUT HAVING TO STRAP AN UNLICENSED NUCLEAR ACCELERATOR ON YOUR BACK.

> PUBLISHER SONY
> GENRE SURVIVAL HORROR
> OUT NOVEMBER

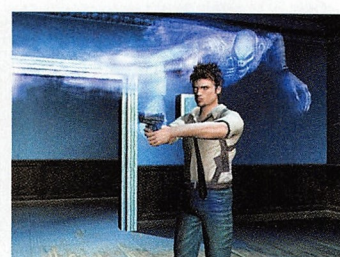
WE'RE SAD BECAUSE WE'VE EXHAUSTED all our *Ghostbusters* gags, but Sony's survival horror/action title is looking ever sweeter, with all manner of areas corresponding roughly to different horror movie genres, from the redneck blood sports of *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* and *Deliverance* to the SFX horror of *Poltergeist* and *Amityville*. Expect invisible ghosts,

evil toy ghosts (brrrr... always the freakiest things), serial killer ghosts and just plain old dead people who want to make you dead too.

Not only does *Ghosthunter* come with a whole heap of nastiness, it's also big on the laughs too. Coming from the people who brought us *Medieval* and *Primal*, this isn't much of a surprise. Expect humour of the puke-your-guts-out variety, and we wouldn't even be that surprised if they actually put in the odd *Ghostbusters* joke or two. We thought of it first!



HELLO NASTY Most ghosts don't look pleasant. Ho no.



HE'S BEHIIIIIND YOU Wait for the loud "BOO!" Heh.



PARA-NOIA You never know where the enemy could be.



LIGHT FANTASTIC This washed-out look's great.



TOP TANKS This is serious hardware for future war.



WAR, BABY Nobody gets off the battlefield alive.



HAIRLESS, FEARLESS Bald boy here looks hard as.



ARMY MEN But nothing to do with 3DO, thank God.



URBAN COMMANDO Inner-city locations look mint.



SCOPE ME OUT We dig the whole near-future thing.

KILLZONE

THE NEXT BIG THING IN SHOOTING? IT'S NEARER THAN YOU THINK. IF YOU HAVEN'T HEARD OF KILLZONE, WE ADVISE YOU TO READ THIS NOW. GO GO GO!

> PUBLISHER
> GENRE
> OUT

SONY
SHOOTING
2004

THERE ARE MANY, MANY GREAT GAMES ON PS2. THE likes of *Gran Turismo 3*, *Pro Evolution Soccer 2*, *Final Fantasy X*, *SmackDown!* and *GTA Vice City* have made Sony's console the only games machine currently worth owning, a fact few would dispute. By contrast there is just one game on Xbox that could ever be considered "great". You've probably heard of it – Christ knows Xbox owners have very little else to shout about. And we're prepared to admit that we're just a tiny bit envious that we don't have a game to quite match the admittedly very excellent *Halo*. But all that, we're reliably informed, is soon going to change.

Sony's futuristic shooter *Killzone* is gunning for Bill Gates, his cumbersome console and the only game worth

owning for the machine. It should also give Sony's disappointing online catalogue a much-needed boost. Set in the future against a backdrop of civil unrest, *Killzone* has you and fellow team members battling for either the pro-Earth ISA military faction or the (presumably rather anti-Earth) Helghast. What this basically boils down to is shooting the shit out of everything that moves in some of the finest looking single-player, co-operative multi-player and deathmatch games battles the world has ever seen, all based around the most realistic and harrowing wartime events from the last century. It could just redefine what it means to play war games on your PS2 – we really mean it. More on this, obscene amounts more, in the very near future.



SPY HARD Third-person makes sneaking easier.

JAMES BOND 007: EVERYTHING OR NOTHING

DO YOU EXPECT US TO TALK? NO PSW, I EXPECT YOU TO – OH, YES, ACTUALLY, DO TALK ABOUT THE NEW BOND TITLE, IF YOU DON'T MIND. CHEERS.

> PUBLISHER
> GENRE
> OUT

EA
ACTION ADVENTURE
EARLY 2004

IT'S FAIR TO SAY THAT WHEN EA TOLD US THAT *Everything or Nothing* would revert back to the third-person perspective gameplay (as seen in the earlier and frankly more shitty PSone *Bond* games) to showcase the digital version of Pierce Brosnan as 007, they had us worried. It's like when they say, "We're reworking the game engine," which really means, "The work experience kid broke it and we don't know how to put it right." We didn't exactly lose sleep, but our brows were definitely furrowed.

These new (and exclusive) screenshots here go some way towards alleviating our concerns. *Everything or Nothing* looks amazing, and some of the new features they've added to the mix have us genuinely intrigued. For

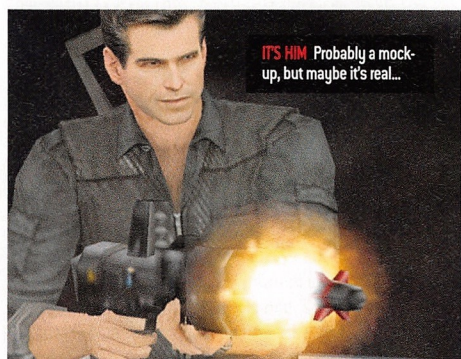
example, as Bond you'll be able to temporarily assume the identity of a defeated enemy, fooling incompetent henchmen into thinking you're one of them, which should be good both for a laugh and to raise the tension levels. Other spy tactics (read: stealth) are to be included, along with the ability to pick up bottles, chairs and tools and use them in hand-to-hand combat, in the great tradition of movie set-pieces. But best of all is the addition of two-player co-operative modes and four-player deathmatch battles, which may allow us to forgive them for making us stare at Bond's smug arse throughout the entire game. We're not 100% convinced yet, but we're getting there. Now all we need is the option to give Moneypenny a good fragging. You know, in multiplayer...



GOOD LOOKING Could nearly be a still from a film. Nearly.



HAVE IT Right on the back of the neck. Take that, evil!



IT'S HIM Probably a mock-up, but maybe it's real...



BIKE STRIKE Like *The Great Escape*! But good.



IT'S A SMASH Now Bond's much more cinematic.

WWE SMACKDOWN! HERE COMES THE PAIN

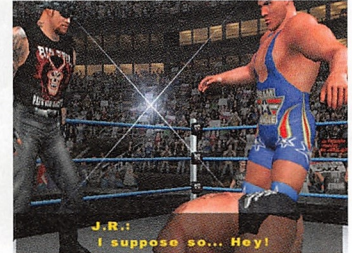
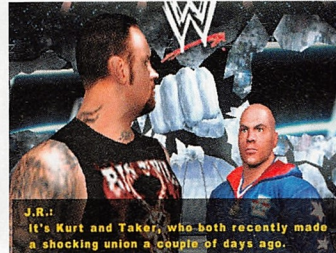
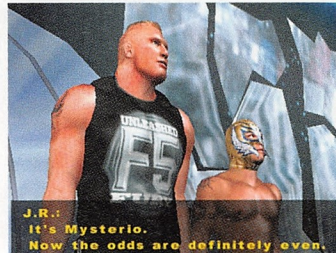
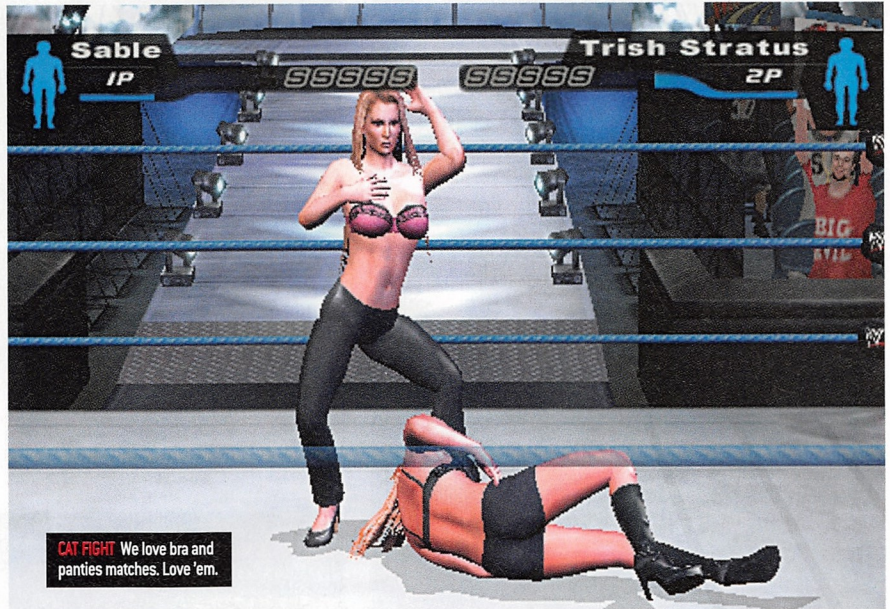


PAIN FOR THE CHUBBY ONES. JOY FOR YOU.

> PUBLISHER THQ
> GENRE WRESTLING
> OUT NOVEMBER

A QUICK STRAW POLL OF THE PSW TEAM REVEALS THAT FIVE out of eight now consider themselves to be proper wrestling fans. That's a 150% year-on-year increase, stat fans. The reason for this vast upsurge in popularity is twofold; firstly, someone sent us Torrie Wilson's naked *Playboy* photos, and secondly, some of us are supposed to be meeting her next month. The life of a video games journalist is a tough one, make no mistake.

Also next month you'll find the world's first ever review of *WWE SmackDown! Here Comes the Pain* in PSW, along with tons of exclusive in-game footage and some cool secret stuff we're not really allowed to talk about. So until then, affix your gaze on these brand new screenshots and just imagine smashing a 12-rung ladder onto Hulk Hogan's face and watching the sweet, life-giving claret drain from his decrepit body. *Here Comes the Pain* will be the bloodiest *SmackDown!* ever, and also the sauciest courtesy of some intriguing bra and panties matches. Which brings us back nicely to why we like wrestling in the first place. Word to the wise: don't miss next issue!



BROKEN SWORD: THE SLEEPING DRAGON



IF YOU LIKE YOUR GAMES LIKE YOU LIKE YOUR FAT HOLIDAY ADVENTURE NOVELS, THIS IS DEFINITELY FOR YOU.

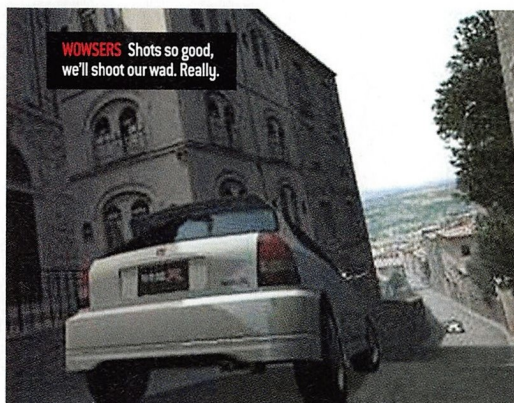
> PUBLISHER THQ
> GENRE ADVENTURE
> OUT OCTOBER

BROKEN SWORD IS AN ADVENTURE game, but there's not a single elf in sight. Or hobbit. Okay, there might be a dragon, but before you see what the *Sleeping Dragon* actually is, you'll have to make it through a smorgasbord of exotic locations including Prague, Paris and, uh, Glastonbury. And what's described here as the "steaming jungles" of Congo, which kind of conjures up images of fresh fly-covered poo to us but probably isn't meant to. It's all in aid of uncovering a giant

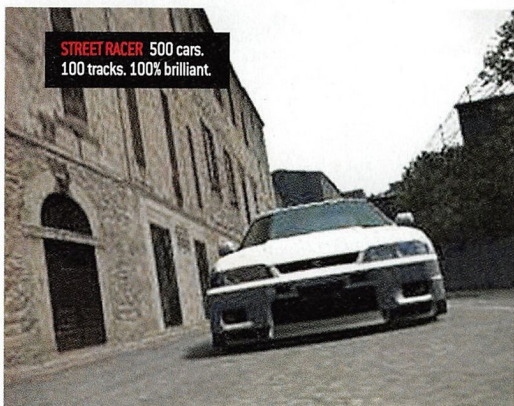
global conspiracy that will threaten (deep voice) LIFE ON EARTH AS WE KNOW IT. Yes, we were quaking in our stylish yet affordable boots too.

You can forget all thoughts of the preceding games' beardy-weirdy, I-love-*Doctor-Who* point-and-click style interface, because *Sleeping Dragon* gives you complete control over your character and context-sensitive commands. Virtual Actor technology makes non-player characters that much more believable. A proper, fairly adult story and decent voice acting should round off the tasty package. That's adult as in "grown up", not adult as in "cheap knocker-flashes in the cut-scenes". Sadly,

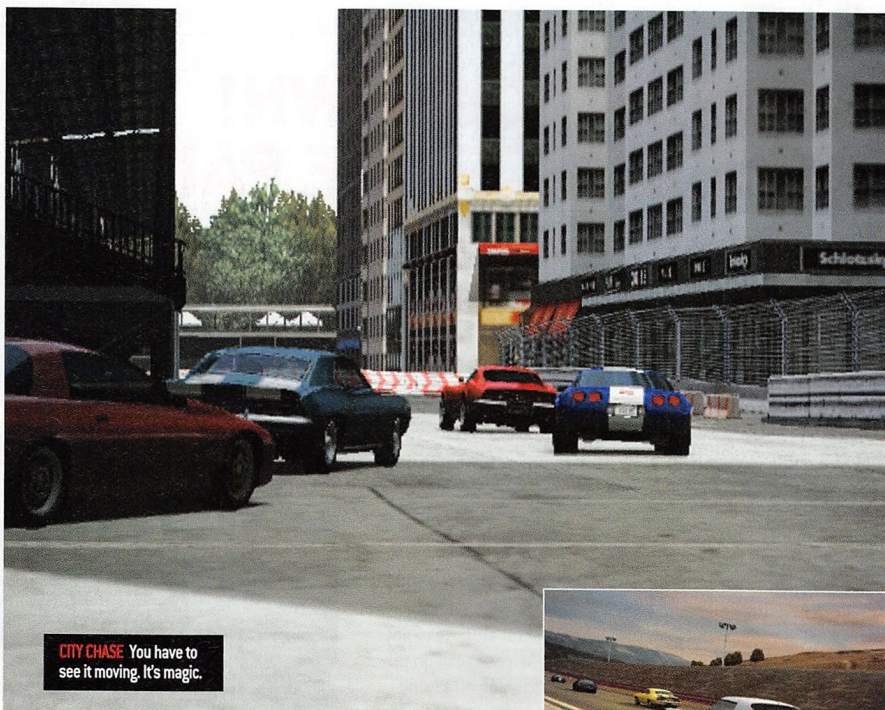




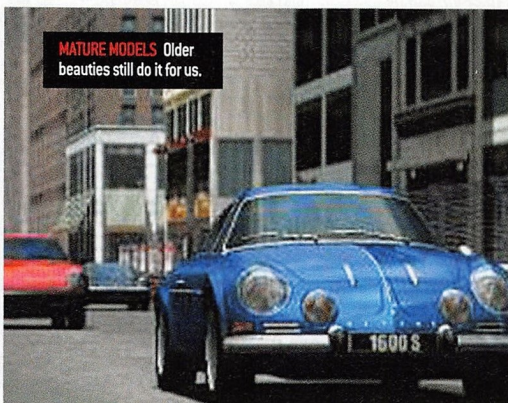
WOWSERS Shots so good, we'll shoot our wad. Really.



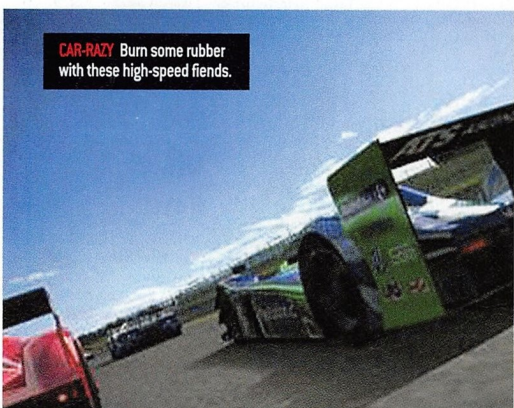
STREET RACER 500 cars. 100 tracks. 100% brilliant.



CITY CHASE You have to see it moving. It's magic.



MATURE MODELS Older beauties still do it for us.



CAR-RAZY Burn some rubber with these high-speed fiends.



RALLY GOOD More like real life than your actual life.



LOOKS SO GOOD We can't hold it in much longer!





EXTRA



EXTRA



WHAT A BEAUTY Even the empty tracks look great.



LOVELY STUFF Circuit racing's much more lively now.



SPEED DEMON Race track levels, for top speeds.



THE MONEY SHOT That's it. We've shot our load. Yeah.



GRAN TURISMO 4



SPEEDING SO FAST IT'S CRASHED INTO THE YEAR 2004. DOH.

> PUBLISHER
> GENRE
> OUT
> ONLINE

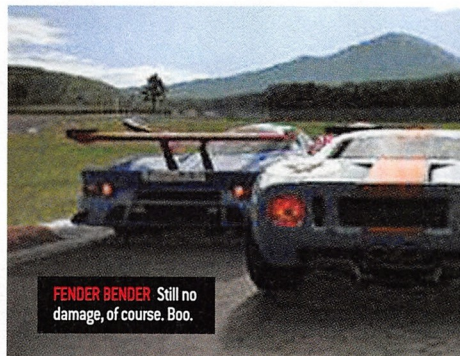
SONY
RACING
2004
YES

GRAN TURISMO 4 BECOMES MORE BEAUTIFUL every time we look at it. The jaw-dropping city scenes of New York or the panoramic stills of the Grand Canyon act as tantalising postcards from developer Polyphony Digital. They don't say, "Wish you were here", but they don't need to. One glance at these new screens and you'll be begging to enter the online compatible world of car nirvana.

But there's a problem. Not with the visuals, the new cars or the ultra realistic handling you understand, but the release date. It could cause riots among car

buffs all over the country, so we'll say it very slowly. *Gran Turismo 4* will not arrive in Australia until 2004. Looking on the bright side, Polyphony Digital has finally shown us what convertible cars will look like, complete with helmet-wearing characters in the driving seat. The new Le Mans cars look like giant tarmac hugging hovercrafts beside the vintage cool of American classics like Chryslers and Corvettes. Next up is the previously unseen country lane roller-coaster of pretty Italy with rolling hills and very narrow streets. Take a super car down one of these





FENDER BENDER Still no damage, of course. Boo.



CAR BLIMEY The more vehicles the merrier.



'AD' NAUSEAM Cunning logos match the real thing.

THE GT TEST TRACK

THE POLYPHONY STUDIOS ARE RIGHT NEXT DOOR TO A HONDA TEST TRACK. THEY SENT US OVER SOME SNAPS FROM A RECENT COMPANY OUTING.



That's Deirdre from accounts receivable about to jump into the passenger seat for the ride of her life. Luckily, the driver really knows how to handle those curves.



Receptionist Diane pulls on a bulbous helmet, a look of nervous excitement smeared across her hamster-ish visage. We're in danger of turning ourselves on.



Win the race and you get to hang tracksuit with Siamese twins connected at the arm. That's cooled us back down again. Nothing erotic about the co-joined.



This is what actually happens when two pretty girls are left on their own. They don't smear lipstick over each other's nipples. They read magazines. Blast.



STREET SMARTS The city courses look stunning.



FUTURE NEWS Gran Turismo 8 may use real cars!



OH, THE COLOURS It gets better and better, no?



IT'S BEEN A WHILE We're more than ready for a new GT.

streets and there's no room for error, especially as five online racers could be behind you, just waiting to laugh at your slightest error.

There's still no word about whether voice communication will be included when playing online. *GT4* mastermind Kazunori Yamauchi is conscious about speed and wants nothing to detract from the speed and thrill of racing. Chatting to opponents online could cause online lag and, worse still, break the concentration required to complete eight laps.

With 500 cars and 100 tracks to speed around, there's no doubt that *Gran Turismo 4* is going to be the

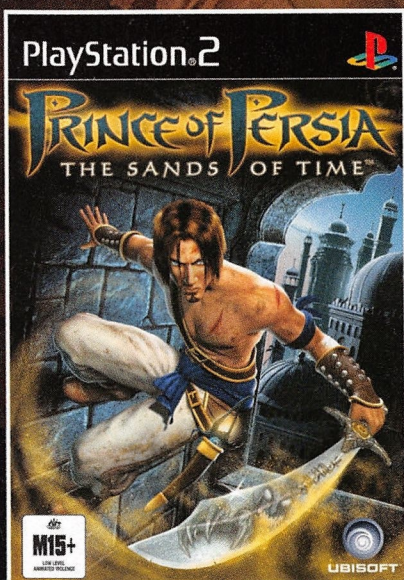
most comprehensive car game ever. And in all likelihood it'll also be the last in the *Gran Turismo* series that we'll see on PS2. They'll probably get another one out when PlayStation3 arrives, but our *PSW* informants suggest that won't be until 2005. By that time we'll probably have normal, sensible middle-aged jobs that don't involve playing games all day, too busy to indulge in online racing and the trading of mufflers, spoilers, alloy wheels and racing chips.

Be that as it may, we'll be giving you loads more on *Gran Turismo 4* very soon. Expect more details and some absolutely exclusive DVD footage next issue.

PRINCE OF PERSIA

THE SANDS OF TIME™

We'd all take
more risks if we could
control time.



The Prince returns with all new abilities. Freeze your enemies in combat, rewind to escape death, see the future to plan your next move.

Time is on your side - but nobody else is.



www.prince-of-persia.com



PlayStation 2



DIALOGUE



THE PART OF THE MAGAZINE YOU WRITE, THEN WE TYPE IT UP IN THE CONDUIT ITC FONT AND PUBLISH IT ALL.

GIRLS MAY CRY

I'm 14 and love PS2. Especially *DMC* and *DMC2*. I think your magazine is so the best. Especially the captions and stuff, it's just so funny. Like in issue 11 when you called 'Anonymous' a fool - that was funny. Also from issue 11, another 'anonymous' said to have more girls at *PSW*, to which you said 'you jsut want to see pretty girls'. Well, I want to see pretty (hot) girls in your mag, and I don't just mean Medusa crap or something like that, I mean hot girls wearing revealing clothes (or no clothes). On more thing, do you know are there any plans for a *DMC3* yet? Seeya, Cale, Ballina NSW

I've let Ash go nuts with the girl request. We are, after all, human (except Richard). No plans yet for *DMC3*, but if God has rhythm and rhyme, then it's certainly no crime.

BIKES ON THE BRAIN

In I think it was issue 13, you printed a letter from someone who was dissing *Vice City* purely on aesthetic grounds. I think this person must of been abused as a child by an afro-haired uncle wearing a pastel-coloured suit giving him some sort of sub-conscious fear of the 80s. If he had gotten past his initial disgust of the *Vice City* era he might have realised that Rockstar were trying their hardest to actually take the piss out of the 80s. He also might of realised that *VC* is far superior to *GTA3*.

The missions in *VC* may not all be as good as the ones in *GTA3* but there are more of them including some absolutely awesome ones like Phnom Penh 86. And once you've done the missions and start Tommi Vercetti's reign of terror on the city of Vice you'll realise that building design means there are more places suited to sniping and generally hunkering down and killing dozens of people and having stand-up gun battles with the cops.

The point of the *GTA* series is to create terror and destruction. If someone

PRETTY (HOT) GIRLS A mag for the people.

SEND YOUR THOUGHTS TO:
Dialogue, PSW,
78 Renwick St,
Redfern NSW 2016
Australia.
OR...
psw@next.com.au

says they don't like the pink neon signs, I can tell you after killing 15,000 VC citizens, causing over 30 million dollars worth of damage and becoming a made man, one really couldn't care what colour the signs are.

In the same issue you covered *GT4* and said a couple of times that you wanted to see is car damage. Car damage would be one of the worst additions to the games, the idea is to go as fast as possible not to ponce your way round the track trying not to scratch the paint work. Bouncing round the track is quite a lot of fun. Rather than using your gaming influence to get something like car damage added to *Gran Turismo* what about something more lasting and interesting like - motorbikes!!

James Tripe, via email

Well James, you certainly had us with your *GTA* point. We couldn't agree more. But then, you go about dissing our *GT* damage demands. Let's just say your name says enough. Although, we did put your suggestion to the bookmaker in last issue's *GT4* coverage. Choice!

GAFFER MANIA

The Gaffer Says this: The Gaffer walks into Hardly Normal (aka Harvey Norman - lets face it, their prices aren't normal) and heads straight to the games (PS2 section). He skims through the selection (not large but not small either). The Gaffer notices that *GTA3* is platinum (The Gaffer doesn't keep up with the times). The Gaffer celebrates in his head as really celebrating may cause a scene and The Gaffer doesn't want to cause a scene - it's just not The Gaffer thing to do. Anyway The Gaffer picks up a copy and checks the price cause The Gaffer is cheap (yes The Gaffer admits that he is cheap). Anywho, The Gaffer ponders at the price and scratches his head. \$59.95. Hmm. I thought all platinums were meant to be \$49.95. The Gaffer doesn't mind paying the extra cash. The Gaffer may be cheap but not that cheap!

So, The Gaffer wants to know if this is right that platinums aren't all \$49.95...

Signed
The Gaffer

PS. Sorry if what The Gaffer writes seems a little incoherent or makes no sense (isn't that the same thing?) anyway im sure you can make out what The Gaffer's rambling is on about.

GAFFER MANIA 2

The Gaffer once again visits Hardly Normal and again wanders over to the games section. The Gaffer notices on the self *GTA3* for \$99.95. Bells and whistles begin to sound in The Gaffer's head. The Gaffer picks it up to have a closer look cause The Gaffer may be going blind. The Gaffer is right, the price reads \$99.95 (The Gaffer is not going blind). The Gaffer looks to where The

Gaffer just picked up the game and sees another copy of *GTA3* this time the price \$59.95. The Gaffer picks this copy up also and tries to find the difference between the two. The Gaffer finds none. One more look on the shelf reveals another copy of *GTA3*. The price on this one reads \$69.95. The Gaffer picks this copy up (no The Gaffer does not have 3 hands, but sometimes wishes he did.) and this time The Gaffer notices on the label PS2 Memory Card. WHAT?! Since when was *GTA3* called PS2 Memory Card?

So The Gaffer wants to know what the deal is here. If The Gaffer finds a total screw over in price does The Gaffer pay the price on the label or what it's actually supposed to be. The Gaffer has found instances where the labels are so badly priced that The Gaffer found a copy of *Tony Hawk 4* for \$20 (a week after release) on the pricing sticker.

Signed
The Gaffer

The Gaffer seems to be doing the old third-person speak. But The Gaffer must be careful. In *PSW's* treatment of The Gaffer, The Gaffer, or anyone else, cannot tell whether it's The Gaffer of someone else talking. Which is a problem for The Gaffer, particularly as *PSW* can say stuff like 'The Gaffer is a buffoon' and appear to be quoting The Gaffer, even when *PSW* are not.

TWO BIG PERIPHERAL COMPS FOR CHRISTMAS!

WIN AIR STYLE

Thanks to Mercantile Pacific

we've got 10

Air Style wireless controllers to give away. Each valued at \$89.95, this is your chance to embrace a cordless future. We're certainly fans of the product, as you would see if you turned to page 94. You simply can't beat a product which is almost identical to the Dual Shock 2, but without the cord! To win, on the back of an envelope write your name and address, and the answer to this:

In 25 words or less, describe what you're going to do now with your unnecessary controller cords.

Address entries to:

Hair stylin'
PSW
78 Renwick St.
Redfern NSW 2016



WIN 4GAMERS

Thanks to Bluemouth

Interactive, you have a chance to win one of five peripheral super packs, containing both the superbly functional and more impressively sensual Soft Touch Playfree wireless controller (valued at \$89.95) plus one of the niftiest peripherals we've seen recently, a vertical stand/multitap combo (valued at \$49.95). Where would *Pro Evo* be without multiplayer glory? To win, on the back of an envelope write your name and address, and the answer to this:

In 25 words or less, describe how you're going to avoid losing your Soft Touch, now it's been liberated.

Address entries to:

Soft Free Touch Play
PSW
78 Renwick St.
Redfern NSW 2016



inform Charts

Thisweek	Lastweek	ProdName	ModName	Manufacturer
1	1	◆ AFL Live 2004	Sports	Acclaim
2	2	◆ Finding Nemo	Adventure	THQ
3	5	▲ SOCOM: US Navy Seals	Action	Sony
4	4	◆ GTA: Vice City	Adventure	Take 2
5	3	▼ Eyetoy: Play	Compilation	Sony
6	0	☆ Madden NFL 2004	Sports	Electronic Arts
7	0	☆ Grand Theft Auto 3 Ptm	Adventure	Take 2
8	0	☆ Dragonball Z: Budokai Fighters	Action	Atari
9	6	▼ Formula 1 2003	Racing	Sony
10	0	☆ Dark Chronicle	RPG	Sony
11	11	◆ Midnight Club 2	Racing	Take 2
12	7	▼ Splinter Cell + Ghost Recon Pk	Compilation	Ubi Soft
13	8	▼ Tomb Raider: Angel Of Darkness	Adventure	Eidos
14	13	▼ The Sims	Strategy	Electronic Arts
15	9	▼ Enter The Matrix	Adventure	Atari
16	18	▲ Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4	Sports	Activision
17	12	▼ The Great Escape	Adventure	SCI
18	10	▼ Medal Of Honor: Frontline	Action	Electronic Arts
19	15	▼ Dynasty Warriors 4	Action	Koei
20	0	☆ Devil May Cry 2	Adventure	Capcom

- ◆ New Entry
- ◆ Non Mover
- ▲ Up from last week
- ▼ Down from last week

inform

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WINNERS!

ISSUE 13 WINNERS

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Major Prize: Cynthia Ryan Holmesville NSW
Glen Hayward Salisbury North SA
Mark Andrikis Theodore ACT
Anthony Kent Port Macquarie NSW
John Hawke Alice Springs NT
Jason Harper Forresters Beach NSW
Matthew John Bull Whyalla Norrie SA
Russell Osborne Diamond Creek VIC
Steven Obrien Croydon NSW
Dim Lei Fung Blacktown NSW
Eric Stewart Wangaratta VIC

DIE NASTY WARRIORS

Joshua Armitage St. Leonards Tas
Brendan Miller Chipping Norton NSW
Gentil Daniel Fernandes East Preston Vic
Time Little Bonalbo NSW
D. Young Kangaroo Flat Vic
Shane Stackpool Mildura Vic
Michael Larkin Tahmoor NSW
John Faint Eschol Park NSW
Oliver Horton Heathmont Vic

TRUE CRIME: STREETS OF L.A.

AT THE RECENT ACTIVATE ASIA CONFERENCE IN WINDY SYDNEY, WE TALKED TRUE CRIME: STREETS OF L.A. – THE GAME MOST LIKELY TO USURP VICE CITY'S ACTION THRONE THIS CHRISTMAS – WITH PRODUCER CHRIS ARCHER.

PSW: What is your role when it comes to True Crime?

CHRIS ARCHER: My role is both as the financial guy and also the visionary and spokesperson. Sort of like a director and producer on a film combined. You get to do both the design stuff and the boring financial side nobody wants to do.

PSW: So you were involved in the creative from the start?

CA: Yeah. We tried to do two things: make a great game for the hardcore and also make it viable in the marketplace. We want to make sure there are things in there that people really attach to, include those elements for the hardcore that people often forget.

PSW: Technology. Was the engine built from scratch?

CA: Yep, from scratch.

PSW: So how long has development been?

CA: Two and a half years.

PSW: So it began pre-GTA3 then?

CA: Hypothetically, we started it before, yeah. They used built tech, and we built our own - the streaming city [loading] on the fly and the GPS data. But now all that's there, we can easily take any city in the world that has GPS data and create it very quickly.

PSW: What were the motivations behind the form of Nick Kang's character?

CA: The story came out of old school LA detective novels, and Kang's character in guys like Sam Spade. We thought no one had done a good police detective game with extra dimensions to it. When you read [one of these stories] there's a lot of dimension to them. And then came obviously the Hollywood inspiration, the world of Hong Kong cinema, action movies. What you end up getting, what I was talking to her [gesturing towards Activision's delightful PR representative] about just then, is like the Asian Riggs.

PSW: You were talking games on your smoking break?


CA: [laughs] We were actually. That's all we do, just talk games. I refer to [Kang] commonly as the Asian Riggs from the *Lethal Weapon* series: a hard-

ass who'll do whatever it takes. But he does it with flair, with martial arts style and slow-motion – things you expect from Hong Kong cinema.

PSW: The game appears very stylized. Was it particularly the 'cinematic' that you have tried to replicate?

CA: We first and foremost think about the player. Believe me, we could always position the camera to have a much more cinematic angle but it's not conducive to play. We had to find a nice balance between easy playability and cinematic flavour. I think we've found a nice balance between those two things.

PSW: The active targeting in particular looks very nice.



"YOU NEVER RUN
OUT OF AMMO IN
OUR GAME! DON'T
WORRY ABOUT THAT.
AMMO, SCHMAMMO.
IT'S FOR FUN!"

button combos. And then grapple attacks. I don't know if you remember [in the demo] but I grabbed the guy by the neck, punched him in the head three times then put in the knee. That was a three button grapple attack. Not only do we have base grapples, but we have two, three and four-button grapple attacks. So, it's really quite deep.

PSW: Is there a blocking system at all?

CA: Block is back.

PSW: High and low block?

CA: Just a general block. It's fast fighting and it's not as strategic. It's more about hit and counter.

PSW: How are the fighting moments set up?

CA: You can fight at any time while you're in the city, and if you're in a shootout you can also fight. But you can't pull your guns while you're fighting.

PSW: So what's the transition like there?

CA: We made it very smooth. Basically that fighting arena you saw was specifically for [fighting]. There are also shooting areas that are

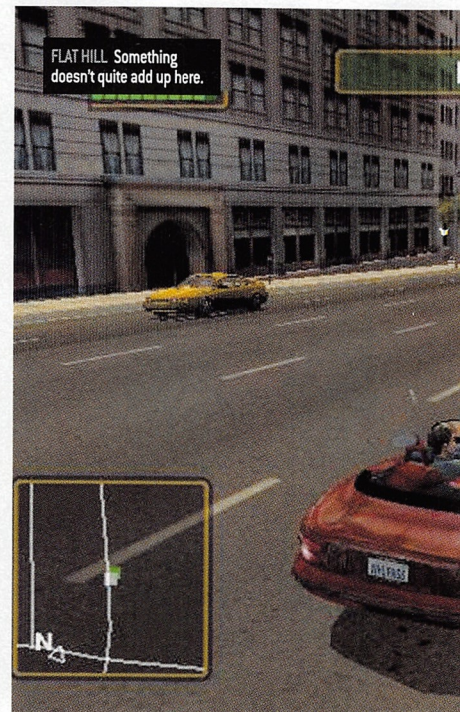
CA: Yeah, it's a nice smooth transition. We worked quite a bit on that.

PSW: How complex is the fighting system?

CA: It's hard to show, because without playing you don't really get the feel. But at the basic level punch and kick are standard. We have a jump kick as well which can sometimes be a standard in a beat 'em up. We have those three moves, and basically two of each of those moves. Sometimes those beat 'em ups include a finishing move or two, something which allows the player to be rewarded. Then we have tons of finishing moves. Those are two, three and four



ARSEKICKIN KANG The bar-room brawl done good.



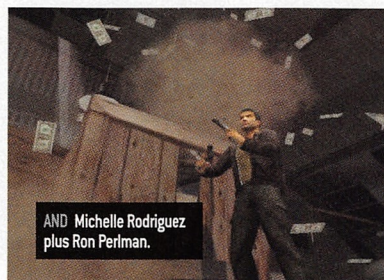
FLAT HILL. Something doesn't quite add up here.



Grand 6th

VOICES INCLUDE Walken, Oldman, Madsen, Wong.

"YOU CAN SHOOT PEOPLE INSIDE THE CAR, YOU CAN SHOOT ALL FOUR TYRES, YOU CAN SHOOT THE GAS TANK"



AND Michelle Rodriguez plus Ron Periman.

specific to that, just shooting. You can try to fight guys when they all have guns, but it's probably not a very good idea.

PSW: So if you're faced with a bad guy on the streets, you can choose to shoot or fight?

CA: Yeah...or, tackle, grapple, arrest, shakedown. There are lots of different variations. That's where you're free. In the city, where there are bad guys, or crime, or civilians. You can shake anybody down on the street. Any direction. Kill anyone. Although, there's obviously consequences.

PSW: What are the consequences?

CA: We tried to put some depth into that. There are tons of consequences. But we made sure not to take ourselves too seriously. As an example, if you kill a number of pimps, their prostitutes chase after you in pink Cadillacs firing at you. They'll get out and actually fight you. There's times where your car will be stolen and you'll be chasing your car from one end of the city to the other. You'll get carjacked. Or you'll be out fighting and your car will get taken. That's frustrating as heck, because you know the only way to take it down is to get in front of it, or take

a tyre out. Then you have to go and repair it. There's a strategy to that. But it does escalate, and it escalates in stages of basically the city rebelling against you if you've gone rogue. Police and then SWAT, things like that, come into play.

PSW: Kang's unit's place within the law-enforcement factions of the city is interesting.

CA: It's a rogue operation. It's somewhere between the FBI and the police department.

PSW: With no official authority?

CA: It's unofficial support, and the FBI works with them. So it's a legitimate organisation with much more open boundaries.

PSW: So you're cruising around LA, and you go to the green dot. And that triggers a mission does it?

CA: Well certain missions begin whenever you're in the city, but the green dot will trigger what we call a story mission. And at that point you'll probably get a cinematic entry which

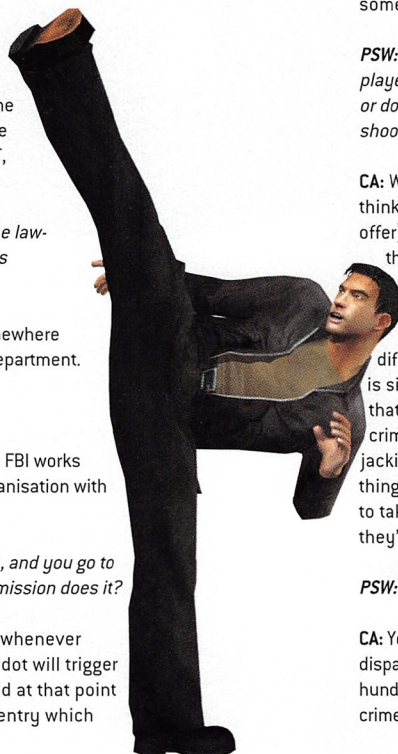
will give you a bit of backstory. And then you'd be thrust into a particular situation. An example of the variety of the missions is where you might be tailing a suspect. If you fire at them instead of actually tailing them, it will take you down a totally different path, where you get ambushed, or you reach a location you wouldn't have reached otherwise. Then that becomes a fight or a shootout or some other experience.

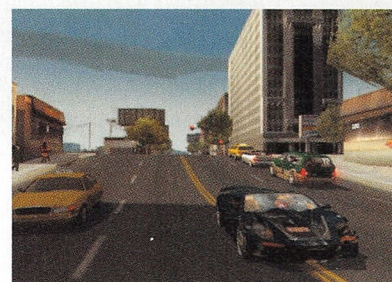
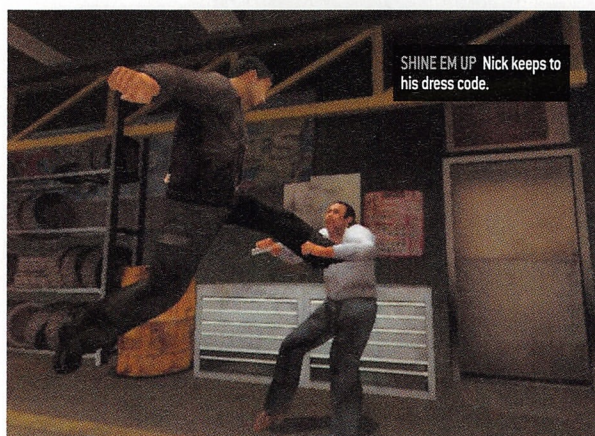
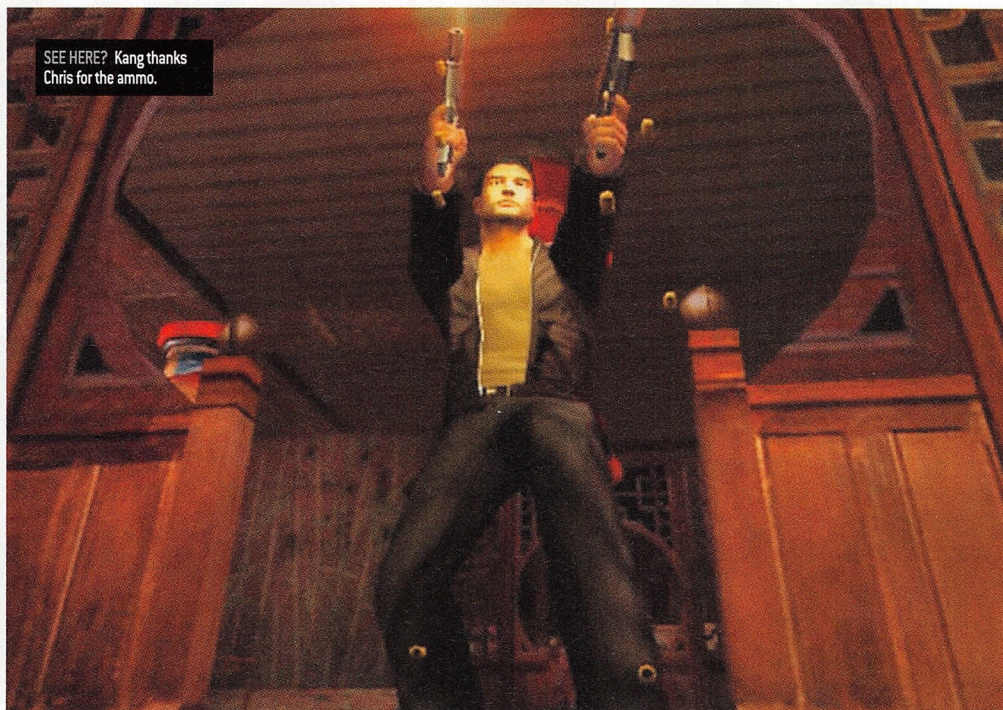
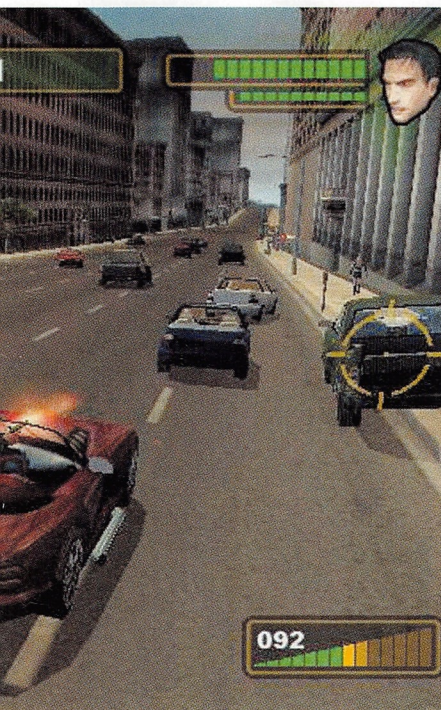
PSW: Is there flexibility within the missions for a player to choose their own strategy for a mission, or do you deliberately set up a mission with shooting, or fighting particularly in mind?

CA: We do both, and that's the beauty of it. I think it will be the first time where [a game will offer] a deep story, but where you'll also feel the freedom to do what you want to do. The story missions progress you in a linear fashion through the story, but those branch, so you actually get [three] different story paths. But what we do which is similar, is that we actually have missions that happen on the fly. You have your random crime things that pop up, for example the car jackings and things like that, then you have things like buses being hijacked and you have to take it down and save all the passengers – they're very sophisticated.

PSW: Just when you're driving around the city?

CA: Yeah. So, rather than going to a spot, there's a dispatcher which announces them. There's over a hundred of those, of all different varieties. Some crimes you'll only get in certain areas.





PSW: How are they actually triggered?

CA: In lots of different ways. We have a random crime generator which is for minor disturbances, like fights on the street – normal things in the environment that happen to be crime. Then we have more sophisticated stuff like the section we showed where I was chasing a truck and shooting the tyres out. That was a little bit more sophisticated because you were supposed to disable the truck then arrest the guy. Then you have LA-specific missions: chasing a white Bronco for example. We have quite a few of those which are very special, like chasing a famous actress in her SUV after a hit and run. These things just happen, but happen based on locations of where they actually happen in real life.

PSW: How accurate is the city?

CA: We've had to take quite a few creative liberties for the sake of gameplay, but not too much in the structure – the streets are exactly right: all of the pavement that you see all the way through the city is created using GPS data and geological survey data. So all the heights, the streetnames, they're all intact. The only liberties we take are in filler. If it was a residential area, we took photos of ten different buildings or houses in those areas. It's not an important part of the

gameplay. But still, the beauty of it is that people from that area in the LA office where I'm from say 'god, that's my house!' or, 'wow, that almost looks like my house!'. So, even with those liberties, it still very much has the LA feel. I could take you to Beverly Hills, or Hollywood and you'd see Mann's Chinese, and the El Capitan, and if you go to Santa Monica, you can drive right down the 3rd Street promenade and see Santa Monica Place Mall, then turn right and there's the beach and the Santa Monica Pier. It's pretty close. We've done a really good job at recreating the space. All the freeways are there, which you're not going to see in any game, and not that that's going to be particularly interesting for anyone but us... [laughs]... but it shows the attention to detail that we took, to make sure all the transitions are the same: the switchbacks, onramps and offramps are all in their appropriate locations.

PSW: Is there a stunt element in the driving encouraged by ramps and other opportunities in the city?

CA: Especially when you're in a chase. We spawn objects in a chase, so it heightens the chase idea. We don't have a stunt system or anything like that, it's such a huge city and there's so much to do already. You can catch air off almost every hill in our game, and we have quite a few hills. Other games can't offer the number of natural hills LA can offer. You can really get some air off, you know, Hill St. in Downtown and a couple of others. I've jumped over six or seven buildings coming down onto a major street and on top of other cars. It's a lot of fun. Some people will just do that. Sit there, rev up, peel out, then take off and try to launch the car as far as they can, and you can go two or three blocks in some cases.

PSW: Are there rewards for exploration in the city?

CA: There's tons.

PSW: What kind of hidden stuff can we expect?

CA: I can't tell you! [laughs]

PSW: Fiddlesticks [not actually spoken].

CA: No we do. And we have some pretty exciting stuff that I think, once you see it, you'll be pretty satisfied, and a couple of special things here and there.

PSW: What was the thinking behind the car handling and physics, and in particular the special moves you can pull off in the game?

CA: It was very movie inspired. You know in *Mission Impossible 2*, with the motorcycle rotating and him firing was a big inspiration.

PSW: When it comes to handling though...?

CA: It's a real physics model, but we've tweaked it so it's fun. A real physics model alone wouldn't be very much fun – a little too real. Even though you might drive like that, it's exhilarating because you're in the car. In a game it needs to



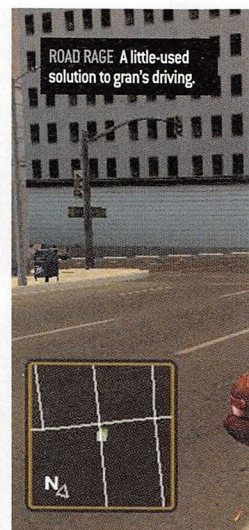
SOUNDTRACK FEATURES... Westside Connection, e40...



PLUS KAM, Caviar, Easy-E Jr. Ice T, DOC and NERD.



KANG'S TOWN Someone's gone rogue...



ROAD RAGE A little-used solution to gran's driving



be exhilarating through your eyes etc. Adding things like [the ability to pop the car] up on two wheels and spinning 180 and things like that add a lot to it. But the feel of the car roll, and losing the back end out, and the sound, the audible sensation – all of this stuff comes into play when you rev up and feel as though it's thunderous going down the highway. That's just as important.

PSW: What parts can damage on the car?

CA: You can shoot pretty much any part, from petrol tanks, to tyres.

PSW: Do the windows shatter individually?

CA: Some do, some don't depending on the vehicle, we set them up differently. But you can shoot people inside the car, you can shoot all four tyres, you can shoot the gas tank. There's over a hundred parts on each vehicle. So, pieces fall off, and in some cases you just end up with a bare burning carcass. It's a lot of fun.

PSW: Following on from some of the teaser movies we've seen promoting the game, what are your thoughts on violence in the game? Does violence sell games?

"YOU HAVE LA-SPECIFIC MISSIONS: CHASING A WHITE BRONCO FOR EXAMPLE"

CA: We're no different from an R-rated action movie. There are consequences to each action in the game. That's what it boils down to, appropriateness. It just has to be right. Vulgarly [in speech]: we use it appropriately. It's realistic. When people are conversing with each other and they're using vulgarity it's not necessarily bad it's just used in context. If it's overly used or not used, it sometimes softens the dramatic effect. It's very similar to a Hollywood action movie. I would compare it no differently to a *Lethal Weapon* or a *Rush Hour*.

PSW: Can we expect blood and gore?

CA: We have blood. It's not particularly gory. It's really light. It's not the important part. The action is the important part, and some people like that a lot and some people don't and we're probably

somewhere in the middle. It's really about the action. These guys are bad guys, so you could go further. But if it doesn't need it doesn't need it.

PSW: What are the major gaming inspirations for this title?

CA: I think the action driving games in general are inspiration.

PSW: Personally, what are some of the game you see as inspiration?

CA: I play just about everything, so...

PSW: If you can't mention games...

CA: No, no, I can mention games. I can tell you what inspires me. Obviously, *Max Payne* was an inspiration. Games like *Tekken* as well. We took cues from our favourite fighting games for *True Crime*. We're inspired by our peers' work. And that's important, because it helps us be competitive and go to the next level. If you see something great, are you going to make something less great? No. But that's just how the world works. But all of the games. *GTA's* an inspiration. *Pokemon's* an inspiration. *Animal*



HAMSTRING Kang does both yoga and pilates.



HE SHOTS, HE KICKS He's a weapon, Nick.



Crossing's an inspiration. You know, RPGs. Really there's a lot of great games out there.

PSW: You're going to have to deal with plenty of comparison with GTA3. What will make your game better than Vice City?

CA: It's up to the consumer, but I'd say, for me, and being totally jaded, I would say 'the deepest combination of driving, fighting and shooting'. That comes together with a branching storyline wrapped around it, top Hollywood actors, West Coast hip hop and that LA vibe. All those pieces together and I'm not even talking about the depth of any of those pieces. Each of those is very robust, but it's the combination, working in tandem, that gives us a slight advantage, but again, it's up to the consumer, to play and to enjoy. And we just hope they have fun playing, and let the story unfold from there.

PSW: What about environments?

CA: Oh man, everything's destructive.

PSW: Everything? Even just the buildings on the street?

CA: Everything but the walls on the buildings on the street. Everything on the sidewalks, all the vehicles, all the interiors. Pretty much

everything that's bolted down, or concrete, and even some concrete comes down. Again, Hollywood effects inspired. You want everything to blow up, it's fun to blow stuff up, and if you're shooting and you're missing, you want a reaction too.

PSW: I just hope you don't run out of ammo.

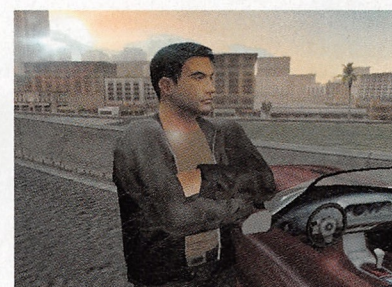
CA: You never run out of ammo in our game! Don't worry about that. Ammo, schmammo. It's for fun! The slow-mo diving: there's no meters, there's nothing to worry about. Simple fun.

PSW: Three endings?

CA: Yeah there's three totally different story paths actually. It's not like three cinematics, or three ending missions. There's three paths you can go down, and each has a different result and story.

PSW: Are the paths based on moral decisions you make, or...?

CA: It's a combination of things actually. Whether you're good, if whether you've gone rogue. It's how you fared in the missions themselves. You don't have to be perfect, but if you're significantly less than perfect, that might put you somewhere else. There are critical missions in the game, which might change the outlook of



BODY LANGUAGE Open up! We're all friends here.

Nick's personality, so there are a lot of different things that come into play there.

PSW: Can we expect to see more games in the franchise after LA?

CA: Called *True Crime: Streets of* – [laughs]. Nah, but we built the name so that we could do sequels but we haven't decided on anything yet. We just hope everybody enjoys the game and that it does well so that we can continue the franchise.

Cheers to Chris and Activision for the interview. Look out for this one at Christmas. It's not going to win any awards for originality, but bringing together the best elements from a range of titles makes plenty of sense. No ammo limitations? We love it already!

/JACKSON GOTHE-SNAPE

PREVIEW

LORD OF THE RINGS: RETURN OF THE KING



> 'AVE IT!

Aragorn's windmilling action is not recommended in real swordfights. Apparently.



"NOW YOU CAN FACE SAURON'S EVIL HORDES WITH A MATE IN TOW"

THE LORD OF THE RINGS: RETURN OF THE KING

EA CELEBRATES THE RELEASE OF A NEW LOTR FILM BY NUDGING FANTASY FANS FOR THEIR HARD-EARNED CASH. WE SUGGEST YOU GIVE UP WILLINGLY.

> GENRE	ACTION ADVENTURE
> DEVELOPER	ELECTRONIC ARTS
> PUBLISHER	ELECTRONIC ARTS
> ETA	NOVEMBER
> ONLINE	NO

IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE NOW, BUT THERE WAS a time when the fantasy genre belonged solely to the unwashed geeks of the world. Swords and sorcery were the dominion of scowling, spotty boys, who played *Dungeons & Dragons* in their parents' basements. We assume that they also wore authentic pointy wizard hats and spent their days using 12-sided dice to predict whether certain girls from school fancied them. Though of course, they never did. Like most sane people, we spent our youth playing football, smoking and copping off with actual real (albeit slightly rancid) girls at crap bars. We cared not a fig for the adventures of hobbits and elves.

But when the first *Lord of the Rings* film came out two years ago, we were instantly converted. Its combination of epic battles, cutting edge special effects and, let's face it, Liv Tyler, ripped the genre out of the cold, sweaty hands of nerd-dom and thrust it into the bright light of mainstream acceptance. Last year's sequel, *The Two Towers* was equally awesome, as was the surprisingly good video game adaptation. A pure-bred hack 'n' slash action adventure, it managed to get the most out of the PS2, milking it like a Swedish porn star. Almost a year on, we've seen the sequel, and it looks like your console is gonna produce the white stuff all over again.

HAIL TO THE KING

The game will follow the plot of the new film closely. As before, it's a fast-paced slasher, but this time out there are several paths through the game, and depending on the characters you choose, you'll get to see different set-pieces from the story. In the 12 or more levels you'll see the battle-scarred remains of Helms Deep with Legolas, enter the lair of Shelob (an effing great big spider) with Frodo, raise the army of the dead with Aragorn and defend Minas Tirith with Gandalf.

The white wizard is one of several newly playable characters (including Frodo and Sam), and a run around one of the courtyards convinced us that he's one you'll definitely want to get your hands on. While in reality Sir Ian McKellan is becoming slightly frail, his on-screen alter-ego shows no sign of aging. The developers have transformed Gandalf into a sprightly spell-chucker with Ninja-style abilities. Witnessing one of his earthquake-like magic attacks taking out a horde of Urak-Hai certainly got us excited.

The cut-scenes from the previous game are back, too. In *The Two Towers* we were particularly impressed at the way the game engine cinematics transitioned seamlessly into clips from the film, and this technique has been retained and refined. This time out, we're promised plenty of exclusive scenes that have been deleted from the movie. Of course, this has been tried earlier this year to slightly naff effect with *Enter The Matrix*, and it ended up ruining *The Matrix Reloaded* movie slightly by deliberately leaving bits out to include in the game. Hopefully it'll be implemented a lot more intelligently here.

ACTION JACKSON

We've heard on the grapevine that the *Ring's* series director, Peter Jackson, has upped the ante significantly for the third film, so it's only fair that EA has done the same for the new game.

This time out the producers have decided to inject some much-needed depth by introducing some tasty new features into the steaming ideas



GADZOOKS! The roasted marshmallow man.



HOW REAL? Like looking in a mirror. While constipated.



MILL-WALL A tooled-up family day out at the New Den.



SILVER SURFER Gandalf's surprisingly nimble for an oldie.



THE BOY SMÉAGOL Fingers crossed for Gollum to make his way in as an unlockable character.

CAPTURING THE MOMENT

IN THE NEW RINGS GAME THE CHARACTERS LOOK AND SOUND EXACTLY LIKE THEIR MOVIE COUNTERPARTS. HOW DEY DO DAT?



> FOR *RETURN OF THE KING*, THE DEVELOPER has had much greater access to the movies assets than ever before. The actors from the film lend much authenticity to the cut-scenes by providing all the voices in the game. It'll be like they're actually talking to you! Even though they obviously aren't, as movie stars tend to avoid the general public like a flesh-eating plague.

The development team has also had access to all the motion-capture data and head scans from digital effects maestros Weta, meaning that your on-screen Frodo will look scarily similar to the cinematic version. Which means you can have great fun letting ogres rip pretty boy Legolas' head off and it'll look like actor Orlando Bloom is actually dying rather painfully. Lovely.

Their tireless dedication to their craft even extends to using the film stars' real stunt doubles. We reckon they could have saved some cash by getting an old tramp to roll around in the studio while covered in motion-capture golf balls and sick to accurately recreate dying Urak-Hai. But apparently you can't get over-proof rum in the States.



BLUE FOR A BOY Don't look so bloody rugged now, do you?



MOTION-CAPTURE... CAPTURED Whilst not in motion.



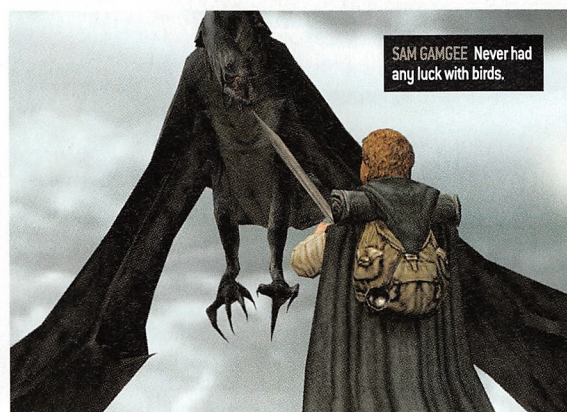
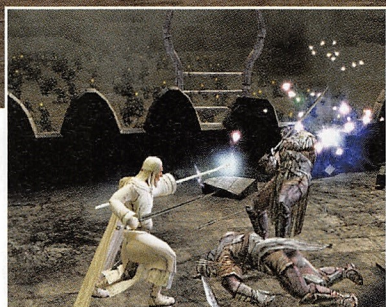
RETURN OF THE KING FACT

> **MORE STEALTH!** You'll have to use Sam's Elven invisibility cloak to sneak past large groups of Urak-Hai.

> **MORE CHARACTERS!** There are several secret characters to unlock in addition to the starting six. We're hoping for Gollum and Merry.

> **MORE DETAIL!** The characters are far more detailed. They even feature armour that can be broken off in pieces.

> **MORDOR!** Much of the game takes place in Mordor, home to Sauron, Saruman and those notorious Two Towers.



“SEXIER THAN JENNIFER LOVE-HEWITT IN A PAIR OF TINY PANTS”



WHAT THE MAKERS SAY

“WE WANTED TO BRING THE TEAM ELEMENT IN, BUT WE WANTED SOMEBODY TO BE ABLE TO JUST PICK UP THE PAD AND RUN AROUND AND START SHOOTING PEOPLE – AND I THINK WE’VE CRACKED IT.”

cauldron. One of the main failings of the last game was that, while the environments were sexier than Jennifer Love Hewitt in a pair of tiny white pants, they operated strictly under lap-dance rules – you could look but not touch. For *ROTK*, the environments are interactive, which means not only can you touch it, you’re actively encouraged to.

For instance, see that flaming spear over there? Why not pull it out of the ground and introduce it forcefully into a troll’s rectum? Don’t fancy that? Well you could always destroy the castle wall by slashing that rope over there to release a tightly wound catapult’s payload into it. These additions add so much to the gameplay that you’ll have a lot of fun simply running around finding mad things to activate and use. In *ROTK*, if it looks useful, it probably is.

MEAT IS MORDOR

The other new innovation is the addition of co-operative play. Now you’ll be able to face Sauron’s evil hordes with a mate in tow, meaning that you have twice the fighting capability. Interestingly, it won’t use the familiar split-screen approach, the developer preferring to stick both combatants on one screen, with the camera zooming in and out to get the best view.

The developer will also be including unique features that will only be available in this mode. It’s unclear exactly how much you’ll be able to interact with the other player directly, but we’re hoping you’ll be able to toss a Gimli-playing comrade. Team up combos and bonuses should be in effect though, and you’ll be able to aid ailing comrades by sharing your health. Which will be useful, because the stingy gits have decided that you’ll only get one life between you.

But it won’t all be health-sharing and long walks in the park with your violent life partner, as there’s also a competitive edge. Some objects activated by one player can inflict damage on the other, which should inspire some frantic chases to get to them first. In our early version of *ROTK* it was even possible to attack your co-fighter, but it was later removed because it encouraged “un-fellowship-like behaviour”.

URAK-HAI KARATE

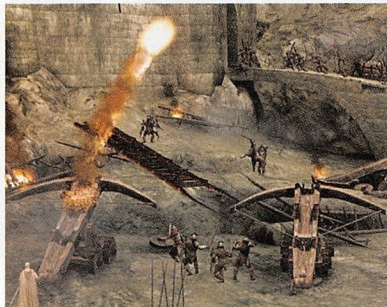
When you’re designing a game based mainly around the removal of goblin organs, it’s important to have a good control system, and here’s another area where *ROTK*’s been improved. The combat has been sharpened greatly and the right thumbstick has come into its own. Using a similar system to last year’s *Blade II*, you can use it to direct your attacks, which is invaluable when surrounded by the dark army. (And as this will happen approximately 99.8% of the time, it’s a welcome addition.)

From what we’ve seen, *ROTK* looks certain to deliver on the developer’s promises. If it were a *Dungeons & Dragons* character, it’d have +10 looks, +5 charisma and a sodding huge sword. EA’s resident dungeon masters might have produced a blinder here, and if you’re up to the challenge in November, you’ll find plenty of villains to smite. Like we said, fantasy is finally cool. Now where did we put that 12-sided dice?

FIRST OPINIONS

A lot of thought has gone into the second *The Lord of the Rings* game and it really shows. Plus it looks bloody amazing. Even if you’re not a fan of the films you just can’t fail to be impressed the scope of the game. We wouldn’t bet against this being Christmas number one.

/ JON HAMBLIN



"BLUE WIZARD NEEDS HEALTH!"

CLASSIC FANTASY GAMES THROUGH THE AGES. OWN TWO OR MORE AND YOU'RE A "BEARDY".



GAUNTLET

ATARI 1985
The arcade game that started it all.



BARBARIAN

PALACE 1987
Notorious head-
lopping fun.



GOLDEN AXE

SEGA 1989
Magic, hack 'n' slash.
Sound familiar?



DRAGON WARRIOR 2

ENIX 1990
Fantastic early
Japanese RPG.



FINAL FANTASY VII

SQUARESOFT 1997
Fantasy series kicks
off big in the west.



BALDUR'S GATE: DARK ALLIANCE

VIVENDI, 2001
Dungeons and
Dragons returns.



LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS

EA, 2002
Shallow, repetitive,
but still great fun.



LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING

EA, 2003
Best movie tie-in
ever? Maybe.

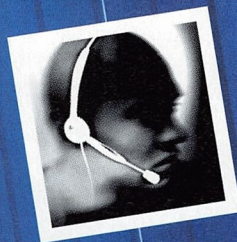
1985 1986 1987 1988 1989 1990 1991 1992 1993 1994 1995 1996 1997 1998 1999 2000 2001 2002 2003



PSW

Online Manual

The (Really) rough guide to online gaming



WORDS > JON BROWN



A (REALLY) ROUGH GUIDE TO ONLINE GAMING

BY NOW PS2 ONLINE WILL HAVE LAUNCHED in Australia. Here follows a brief explanation of its benefits to the Amish technophobes among you, those readers who believe that Casio watches run on a mystical concoction of voodoo, unicorn droppings and sunbeams: PS2 Online theoretically allows your console to communicate with Sony machines from across the globe, thus enabling you to play games with people from countries whose capital cities sound like spelling mistakes. Think Tbilisi, Georgia.

Sounds pretty special, doesn't it? Believe us it will be. But before you get carried away with dreams of tomorrow and tomorrow and the tomorrow after that, please bear in mind that for the uneducated, the online arena can be an extremely intimidating place to visit. Which is why we're here to hold your hand as you stand on the threshold of the future, preparing to dive with your PlayStation2 tightly clutched to your chest into the pitch-black vacuum of cyberspace. The following guide details everything you need to know to survive out in the big worldwide web. Follow it closely.

1/ Earn more money

Online gaming can drain your bank account faster than an addiction to eating caviar off the nipples of high-class escorts. To start you off, you need a spare \$90 for the PS2 adapter, at least \$200 to have your place of residence hooked up to broadband pipe and then another \$100 for a decent game. After that, your main concern is covering the rolling cost of your broadband access, which, once you've managed to track down a halfway decent deal, should set you back around \$80 a month. Add all that together... 80 plus 90... carry the seven... [takes off shoes and socks and starts counting on toes]... and you're looking at more than \$1000 in total for your first year of online play. And that's on the grounds that greedy developers won't start charging you separately to connect to their games, as has now become common practice for many PC net games. We wish we could confirm that this will never happen with PS2 titles, but we know that people love money. Yes, even Sony; who'd have thought it? All in all, it's clear that keeping your PS2 in the latest combinations of zeroes and ones is going to be a fairly costly hobby.

>> PSW TIP <<

Why not take on a job in McDonalds to pay off your net access? With an hourly rate of just under \$8, you'd only need to work three hours a week to cover your costs. Not bad



2/ Think up a decent name

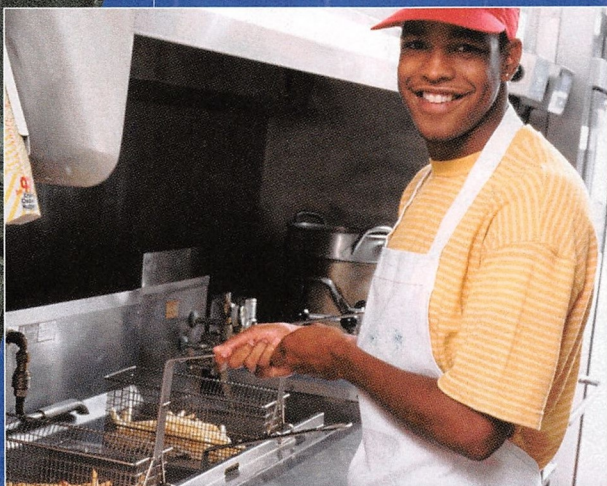
Before you start playing, you'll be asked to enter your name. Whatever you do, don't give your real one. Similarly to the world of adult entertainment, it's considered something of a *faux pas* to use the title printed on your driving license when mingling with other online players. There are two very good reasons for this: for one, every time you submit personal information over the worldwide web you open yourself up to a whole world of piss-taking. Whatever your name happens to be, no matter how water-tight against ridicule you may think it is, people will always find a way to turn it against you. Jonathan Brown becomes Jona-Fanny Brown-Pants. Lee Nutter becomes Wee-wee Nutsack. Mark Robins becomes Dark-patch Nobbins. Or something similar. Just trust us. It's best all round if you can think up an alias.

And for two, assumed names can inspire levels of fear and respect among rival players that everyday monikers just can't manage. Compare and contrast the message: "You have been killed by Geoffrey Hubbins," with the slightly more sinister: "You have been flayed alive by Sir Doomslayer the Harvester of Souls." Say no more. Unless you were born in a gothic castle on the edge of the darker side of reality and your parents are the Duke and Duchess of BloodSlaughter, you've got to think fast.

Some general advice to consider when thinking up your new tag: 1) Avoid using the title 'Lord', which can be easily reversed by the addition of the word 'Gay'. 2) Use enough gothic-style language to reduce a sixth-form poet to wobbling sobs of dribble-snot jealousy. 3) NVR Uz the RiTe Speeeling, NewBie. And 4) If all else fails, just keep it short but terrifyingly macho. 'Lady Strangler' should do just just fine.

>> PSW TIP <<

Struggling to settle on a name? Then why not think up a famous Frank and replace his first name with the word Frag (see glossary)? Thus: Frag Spencer, Fraggie Fredericks, Frag Bruno, Anne Frag – the list is almost endless.





3/ Learn to be much better at games

The single most unpalatable aspect of playing your console over the internet is that it forces you confront the life-changing truth that you're not quite as good at games as you thought you were. OK, so you're the best *Pro Evolution Soccer* player in your area, but could you compete with the best in the country, or the best in Europe, or the best in the world? Unlikely my friend, highly unlikely. The simple fact is that however much time you spend with your PlayStation2, there's always someone somewhere willing to go that little bit further, and unless you're prepared to leave your job/quit school/break up with your girlfriend to get ahead, you'll just have to swallow your pride and learn how to lose graciously.

Those who are hungry for victory should begin hacking away the flab from their life immediately – any unwanted pets and relatives should be notified and disposed of, any distractions such as wallpaper, carpeting, crockery and comfortable furnishings should be incinerated post-haste – in order to make way for a gruelling daily training regime to be followed strictly on every day, even Sundays. Our advice: shave off all bodily hair in a bid to reduce grooming times and improve finger stamina by investing in an acoustic guitar to be strummed softly during toilet breaks.

>> PSW CIO <<

According to boffins, cooking is the ideal way to improve your hand-eye coordination. By familiarising yourself with the previously baffling snack-making process, you could improve your online ranking.

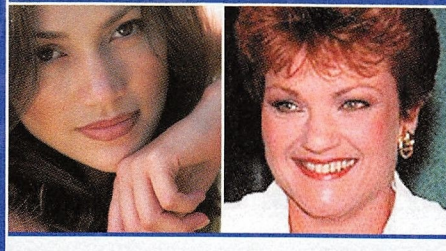
4/ Learn how to talk the talk

Wherever there are lonely, unemployed men with cheap internet access, futurespeak and abbreviated abbreviations shall always flourish. Attempting to communicate with fellow players is hence impossible if you're not readily familiar with the constantly evolving language known as Geekspeak. Which is why you'll need the cut-out-and-keep glossary thoughtfully provided by your lifelong chums at PSW. Don't thank us, just let us score a couple of easy goals if we ever bump into you during a game of PES4. It's L33T, whatever that means. No, we really don't know. Sorry. What do you think google is for?



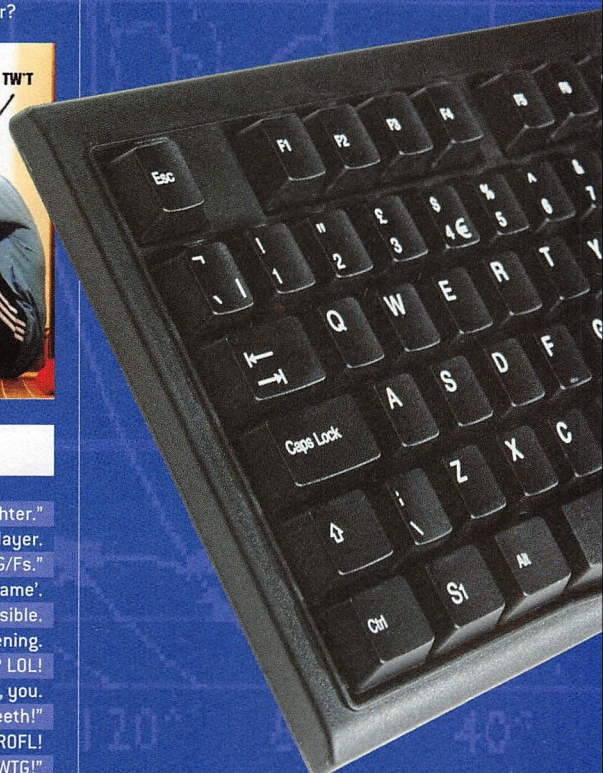
HOW TO MAKE YOURSELF LESS OBSESSED WITH GRAPHICS AND FRAME-RATES

Simply flick your eyes between the photos of box-faced super-polly Pauline Hanson and Jennifer Lopez provided below, telling yourself mentally that there's no discernible difference between the two until you actually can't tell them apart. Job done.



5/ Condition yourself to be less obsessed with graphics and frame-rates

Internet technology is currently in its awkward phase. Too big to be watching the Tweenies with the children yet not quite mature enough to join in with the adult conversation about high heels and private healthcare, the net often finds itself out of its depth; what wrestling commentators brilliantly refer to as: "Writing cheques your body can't cash." So it is that when playing the first round of PlayStation2 games online that you may notice a few blemishes in performance, particularly in our geographically well-endowed nation as it is. The demands of keeping your PS2 in a constant dialogue with a machine situated a thousand bus rides away can often make the games stutter or slow down slightly, particularly when large number of gamers are participating. Will it get sorted out? Definitely. Will you be bored/dead/taking in your games through a straw in a nursing home by the time it is? Yes. So get used to it.



PSW ONLINE GLOSSARY

>> BTW –	By the way. As in, "BTW – I'm sleeping with your daughter."
>> FRAG –	A term used to describe the killing of another player.
>> G/F –	Girlfriend. As in, "Many people who play games pretend to have G/Fs."
>> GL –	Good luck. A bum-kissing bedfellow of GG, meaning 'good game'.
>> IRL –	In real life. Try to avoid this one where possible.
>> LAG –	The delay between pressing the button and something happening.
>> LOL –	Laugh out loud. Just read the top five <i>Star Trek</i> continuity errors? LOL!
>> NEWBIE –	Someone without experience of online gaming. Basically, you.
>> OMG –	Oh my God. As in, "OMG – this mouldy bread is giving me furry teeth!"
>> ROFL –	Roll on floor laughing. Just read the top ten Klingonisms? ROFL!
>> WTG –	Way to go. As in, "You've just sewn my lip to the curtains! WTG!"

6/ Learn how to type / Learn how to shout

Try as you may, it's sadly impossible to avoid communicating with your fellow players. Between games you're often sent to wait in a lobby area, wherein inquisitive gamers will frequently mistake your self-imposed silence for shyness and attempt to engage you in a hyper-moronic exchange of strength-sapping weblang and 'aren't-I-quirky-and-fun?' emoticons. The second quickest, second most effective way to inform the offender that you're really not interested is via a USB keyboard. Although it is technically possible to use your joystick for chat purposes, moving the cursor to select each and every letter is insanely long-winded, and often by the time you've thought up a decent insult and managed to type it in the tide of the conversation has turned and no one can remember what you're on about. All things considered then, it'd be pretty handy if you could learn how to touch-type. Some chick named Mavis Beacon, the shining light herself, says she can offer her services. Joff's not falling for it again this time though.

Don't fancy the keyboard? Then don't fret. Games like *SOCOM: Navy Seals*, as well as just about every forthcoming online release allow you to talk to teammates through a telesales headset, but be warned: those of you with voices camper than Bob Downe's poodle will be ripped apart within minutes. To combat this, practice barking out orders in the manner of Sergeant Hartman in *Full Metal Jacket* until you're confident that you sound authoritative and fully in command. And that's an order, you filthy maggot. It won't work, of course. You'll just sound like Bob Downe talking into a bowl of pebbles.

>> PSW CIO <<

Fancy voice coaches believe that by sitting up straight, placing both feet on the ground and imagining yourself in a position of power you can toughen up your tone of voice. Try it. It's probably bull.



THE FRENCH – Those wacky frogs have spent years building up a reputation for complete military incompetence. Use this to your advantage.

DEFINING CHARACTERISTIC THE BIG NOSE



THE ENGLISH – English people appear shy and reserved, but are in fact the filthiest, most sexually depraved people outside Holland.

DEFINING CHARACTERISTIC BAD TEETH



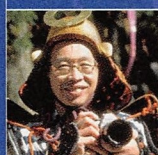
THE GERMANS – Uptight and ruthlessly efficient, the Germans are war-mongering, curly-permed David Hasselhoff worshippers.

DEFINING CHARACTERISTIC THE BUM BAG



THE AMERICANS – Imagine a walking erection in cowboy boots carrying an Uzi 9mm and a banner declaring, 'USA OK'. Like that, only fatter.

DEFINING CHARACTERISTIC FIFTH CHIN



THE JAPANESE – In joke books, Japanese people are small, armed with a camera and constantly engaged in some kind of kamikaze activity.

DEFINING CHARACTERISTIC NIKON CP200

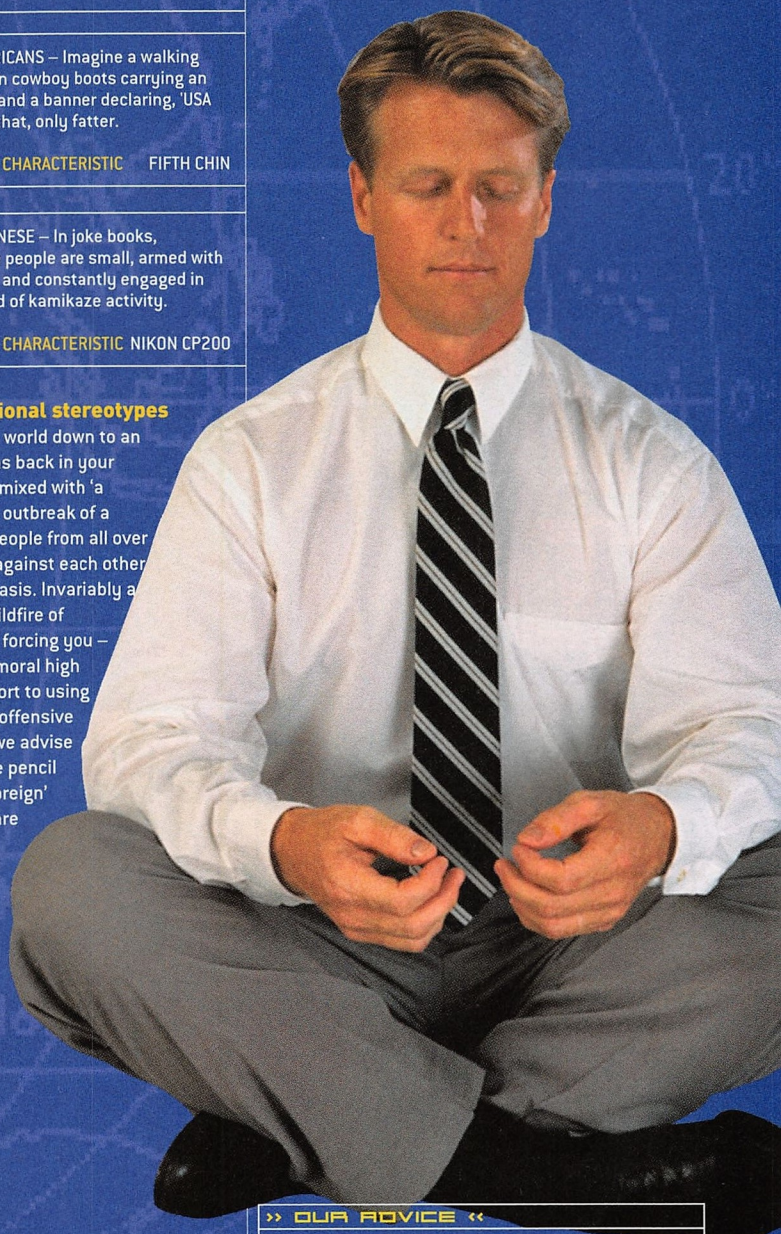
7/ Bone up on your national stereotypes

The internet has shrunk the world down to an uncomfortable size. Whereas back in your grandfather's day you only mixed with 'a foreigner' in the event of an outbreak of a numbered war, nowadays people from all over the world are forced to rub against each other like flint stones on a daily basis. Invariably a single spark will lead to a wildfire of bickering and name calling, forcing you – try as you may to take the moral high ground and avoid it – to resort to using national stereotypes as an offensive weapon. With this in mind, we advise you study closely the above pencil sketches of five common 'foreign' types. Bear in mind, these are all utterly wrong and contemptible. But you knew that, right?

8/ Learn to be more patient

Whereas currently it only takes you a maximum of 90 seconds to turn your console on and start playing, when dealing with forces beyond your control – other players, internet service providers, the ill-tempered Gods of modern technology – the whole process can take a little longer. Imagine, if you can, 32 players attempting to configure their personal settings to a satisfactory standard between games and you can see why your patience will be sorely tested in the very near future.

Another pitfall is the dreaded Server Crash, where the central machine housing the game suddenly decides, for occult machine-based reasons of its own, to call a halt to proceedings and throws all gamers out with a jarring thump, leaving them shaken and with cartoon canaries circling their heads. Hopefully this won't happen as frequently as it did in the early days of the PC, but we're not getting our hopes up too much.



>> OUR ADVICE <<

Either buy a novel to read as you wait or set up an auxiliary or 'nursemaid' PS2 to keep your fingers occupied during any gaps in play. Thus will you prosper. And the benefits to your hand-eye co-ordination will be extraordinary. I've heard Mavis Beacon's a capable lass.



> THE FAME GAME

Ever wanted to know what your favourite celeb is like on the inside? No problem.

“FAMOUS PEOPLE ARE MENTAL AND KICK OFF AT THE DROP OF A HAT”

CELEBRITY DEATHMATCH

AT LAST A CHANCE TO GIVE JUSTIN TIMBERLAKE THE KICKING HE DESERVES. AND JERRY SPRINGER. HE DESERVES IT TOO.

> GENRE	FIGHTING
> DEVELOPER	BIG APE
> PUBLISHER	TAKE 2
> ETA	OCTOBER
> ONLINE	NO

WE AT PSW LOVE A GOOD CELEBRITY ARSE. The office walls are plastered with them, and it's amazing how much a cheeky picture of Kylie playing tennis can make the day fly by. But every curvaceous celeb bottom comes with a warning: You must never try to pursue popular posteriors in real life, because most famous people are mental, and are likely to kick off at the drop of a hat. Even the mildest mannered of celebs can lash out, as *PSW* once discovered when a drunken autograph request to a diminutive TV time lord went terribly wrong.

Given this mental instability, it's no surprise that the rich and talented often get into rucks with each other, and we love to watch. MTV tapped into this desire to see showbiz claret on the red carpet with its popular series, *Celebrity Deathmatch*. Ripping its bouts straight from the headlines, it was like a Claymation WWE, only with copious gore and surreal finishing moves. Perfect ingredients for a PS2 game then.

RING OF FOOLS

Developer Big Ape is obviously a fan of the show, as the attempts to capture its look seem to be coming along nicely. Commentating pundits Johnny Gomez and Nick Diamond make an appearance, and there are 17 celebrities to choose from, but they're a fairly random bunch of B-listers. The show's match-ups were cleverly chosen and invaluable for settling arguments like which Gallagher brother was the hardest, and which Backstreet Boy the softest. Unfortunately the game relies on surreal pairings to make you laugh, which isn't quite as effective.

The main game is divided up into six 'episodes', with three fights to each. Win all three fights and you unlock the next episode. The match-ups are pre-selected, so you play a different character in each of the fights, rather than take one character through all three.

All the characters have a range of fighting moves, from simple punch-throwing through to chainsaw-wielding. There are no complex button combos to memorise though, as the moves are context-sensitive depending on your distance from your enemy.

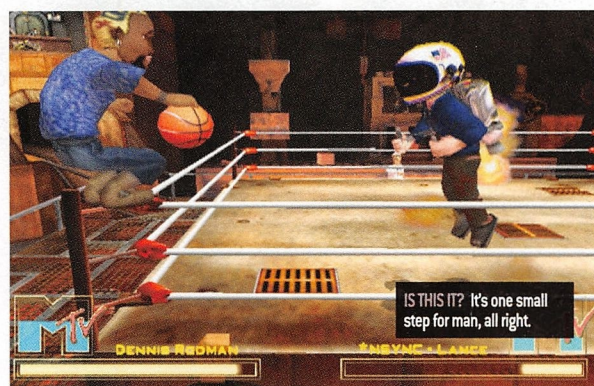
GOOD FIGHT, GOODNIGHT

At the moment it's quite hard to see who the game will appeal to. Its gameplay is far too simplistic to appeal to wrestling fans, and it's unlikely that kids will even know who some of the celebrities are. Most of the celebs (Dennis Rodman, Jerry Springer and, er, Mr T) seem a bit old hat, and it seems a shame they haven't picked more current stars. Who wouldn't want to see current Hollywood hell-raisers like Colin Farrell and Russell Crowe go toe-to-toe, for example? And what's the point of having Justin Timberlake as a playable character if you can't go a few rounds with past-it pop babe Britney? Hit me baby one more time? Not here sadly.

FIRST OPINIONS

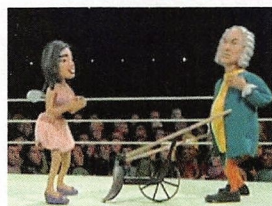
The occasional cheeky laugh aside, *Celebrity Deathmatch* doesn't really deliver. The Episode mode is extremely easy to finish, none of the unlockable characters are real celebs and the move lists are limited. If they can expand the game, this might be a good post-pub brawler. If not, expect a *PSW* verbal battering.

/ JON HAMBLIN



ROYAL RUMBLES

SOME CLASSIC BOUTS FROM THE ARCHIVES OF THE TV SHOW



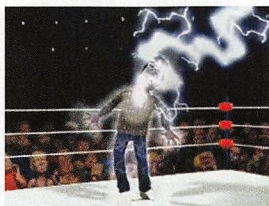
> BECK VS BJORK

These two alternative stars may know how to bang together an arty album, but when they clashed in the ring it was bloody mayhem. In the end Beck was the loser, baby. So she killed him.



> BEYONCE VS MISSY ELLIOTT

A hip hop David Vs Goliath, it's safe to assume that Beyoncé wasn't crazy in love with Missy. Not that Missy cared much. She just sat on her skinny rival, bringing the pain most effectively.



> J K ROWLING VS STEPHEN KING

Two blockbuster fantasy authors, only one of them could survive. Rowling harnessed the powers of darkness, but ultimately got a kicking from King's detached cybernetic robot leg. Obviously.



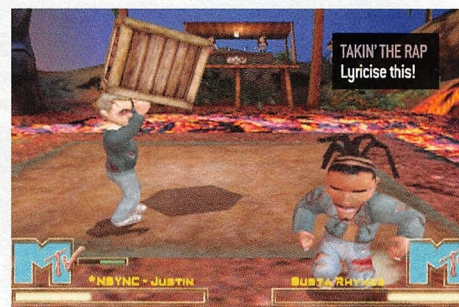
> ANNA KOURNIKOVA VS ELIZABETH HURLEY

One for the lads, this was a top totty hair-pulling contest. Two prime candidates for a lovely girls contest, Liz won out in the end by using Anna's own racket against her. Owchie.



> THE BEATLES VS THEMSELVES

John, Ringo and Paul have never got on that well, but obviously McCartney's *Frog Song* was a step too far for his ex-bandmates. Perhaps Lennon should have let it be, though. Sorry.



CELEBRITY DEATHMATCH FACT!

> TIME FOR T
Don't mess with Mr T. He's not only trained in the art of war, he also has the ability to drop a van on you. Fool.

> LORD OF THE RINGS
Big Ape's last title was *Simpsons Wrestling*, another TV tie-in fighting game. It was rubbish though.

> PRODUCTION LINE
Create-a-celebrity lets you construct your own star. Sadly you can't choose an eating disorder for them.

> THE BIG GUNS
You can occasionally pick up weapons that appear in the ring. We liked the Blunderbuss.



> DEAD TOWN

Apparently zombies modelled their unique appearance on the typical Xbox gamer.

“YET MORE ZOMBIES
MAKING THE NOISE OF THE
SUPPRESSED ORGASM”

RESIDENT EVIL OUTBREAK

PSW GETS UP CLOSE TO THE MOST HEAVILY ANTICIPATED ONLINE GAME EVER AND SNIFFS ITS UNDERCARRIAGE. IS THAT THE FUTURE WE SMELL?

> GENRE	SURVIVAL HORROR
> DEVELOPER	CAPCOM
> PUBLISHER	CAPCOM
> ETA	2004
> ONLINE	ER, WELL, UM, MAYBE...

A MAN WALKS INTO A BAR. SOUNDS LIKE THE beginning of a joke told to you in a service station cafeteria by an elderly widower in desperate need of company that doesn't need either inflating or paying. Only it isn't. It's the opening stage direction in a forthcoming nightmare to be directed by the dirtiest thought from the grubbiest suburb of your brain. Because the man in question isn't a man, he's a zombie. And because the bar he's walked into just so happens to be The Gangrenous Wound, a locals-only public house situated in downtown Raccoon City, the third most unfortunate place on Earth. Behind Silent Hill and Redfern.

So begins scenario one of five in *Resident Evil Outbreak*. After the zombie walks into the bar and groans his only line, the opening cut-sequence fades away and the action starts. The first thing we notice is that we're no longer alone. In this *Resident Evil* we've got three human accomplices, all of whom are as panicked and as desperate as we are. The team immediately scatters as we attempt to figure out what we're supposed to be doing. One character attempts to block the door to curb the flow of zombies, another pulls a pistol and begins shooting at the arms of the undead as they poke through the doors. A third (that would be us) runs behind the bar in search of sanctuary and navy rum. The doors eventually give and a gunfight ensues.

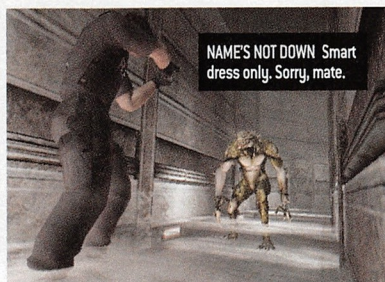
Tiring of playing the team game, we run off in pursuit of solo thrills. According to lead producer Tsuyoshi Tanaka, it is possible to complete the objectives alone, it's just very (very, very, very) hard to do so. Three minutes and two lovebites later we understand exactly what he means. There are far more zombies than we've ever seen before in a *Resident Evil* game, presumably on account of the fact that there are now four players to chase after and not just one. We call for help (orders can be issued by tapping the right analogue stick) and within seconds a burly black man with an authoritative moustache has kicked his way through the door and has cleared the room. He wanders over to us, throws an arm around our flaccid, bleeding body and begins hauling us clear of the scrum. It's then that we have a moment of clarity: "So this is how *Outbreak* is supposed to be played. As a team and not as four individuals playing four different heroes in four different films."

We're pulled into a clearing and offered a herb to restore our health. Item sharing is a big part of *Outbreak*. But no sooner have we chewed through the root than the room is overcome by yet more zombies making the noise of the suppressed orgasm. As Satan's inbred cousins gnaw through our trembling flesh, a small gauge in the bottom right-hand corner begins flashing violently. This can't be a good thing. It isn't. It means we're about to turn into a zombie. Oh crap.

FIRST OPINION:

So much depends on whether or not Capcom can overcome the technical difficulties they're currently experiencing to get *Outbreak* online (see panel). We've yet to play the single-player game, but it's already clear that the full *Outbreak* experience requires a Broadband adapter and three fellow humans. Cross your fingers and start sucking up to God. He needs to pull some strings with Telstra.

/ JON BROWN



BEFORE YOU GET TOO EXCITED ABOUT *OUTBREAK*, THERE'S SOMETHING YOU SHOULD KNOW...

WHAT IS IT? DON'T KEEP ME IN SUSPENSE.
OK. I think you should sit down and clench yourself. It's not good news. Ready? There's a chance that *Resident Evil Outbreak* won't be playable online in Australia.

[SILENCE]
Say something. Come on. It's not all bad. Your mates in Japan and America will still get to play over the net.

THAT ISN'T FAIR. IF THEY CAN, WHY CAN'T WE?
Apparently the technology isn't even up to scratch in the UK, let alone Australia at present. Capcom is talking about the possibility of releasing a single-player version first, then a multiplayer version at a later date once the networks are ready.

WON'T THAT BE A LITTLE BIT RUBBISH?
Possibly, but it's better than no *Resident Evil Outbreak* at all. A Capcom spokesman was keen to point out that at present no definite decision has been made. It could still be online compatible over here, but there are grave doubts.

RESIDENT EVIL OUTBREAK FACT!

> THAT'S MENTAL
One of the scenarios (each lasts one-and-a-half hours apparently) takes you through the institute in *Resi 2*.

> HARD AND FAST
According to *Resi*'s producer, it'll run smoother if you own a PS2 hard-drive. Did you just feel your wallet flinch?

> DEAD EASY
Each character has a unique skill. One combines items, another plays dead, meaning zombies ignore him.

> HOLDING ROLE
In the solo mode you'll be joined by two computer-controlled characters, who can carry items for you.





"EVERY MISSION IS
BASED ON EVENTS OF
THE PACIFIC BATTLE"

MEDAL OF HONOR RISING SUN

MORE 'SAVING THE WORLD' SHENANIGANS ADD TO THE PS2'S GROWING
FPS LIBRARY IN THE LATEST INSTALMENT OF THE HONOR FRANCHISE

> GENRE	SHOOTER
> ETA	DECEMBER
> DEVELOPER	EA
> PUBLISHER	EA

WITH AS BROAD A GAMING CATALOGUE AS EA HAS, their influence on the industry is profound. Add to the classic EA Sports titles the recent release of *Soul Calibur*, early 2004's release of *Final Fantasy X-2*, *SSX3*, *Lord of the Rings*, and *Need for Speed* and you've got something for everyone. It is unbelievable how a company can dominate games publishing so heavily, considering its competitive, cyclical, dynamic nature.

EA has a plethora of gaming goodness resting on their creative perches, and it's with this roost that EA LA has excitedly added yet another chapter to the *Medal of Honor* franchise. *Medal of Honor Rising Sun* shoots for the other side of the famed battles of World War II, taking the focus away from the notorious Nazis and instead, looks at their more honourable allies, the Japanese. Rising Sun puts you in the fatigues of Joe Griffin, one half of the Griffin brothers, and throws you, quite literally, in the deep end. Players awake to find themselves aboard the USS California as the Japanese attack on what is now known as the "Day of Infamy". The famed Pearl Harbor assault is the perfect intro to the game, and, like *MoH: Frontline*, it's this eye-opening beginning that sets the scene, tone and atmosphere for each chapter of *Rising Sun* that follows.

The crux of all *Medal of Honor* games has been to recreate the emotions, adventure and grandeur of World War II. While glorifying war should really only be left up to Jerry Bruckheimer, EA has boldly taken the driving seat in creating a balanced product that delivers both educational, fun and poignant gaming. With each iteration of the series, this goal has been reached with accomplishment and EA has maintained the same level of care demanded when touching on subjects of war, heroes, and good and evil. As history has been written, you can't get anybody badder than Nazis, but under the influence of progression and understanding (and novelty), EA has opted to use the Pacific portion of WWII to tell another story. The Japanese are the enemy in *Rising Sun*, and as such, a different approach to enemy confrontation is experienced as EA LA has gone to extreme lengths to focus on the differences between the two empires.

This initiative is a driving force for playing the game, and the jungle settings and difference in levels, structure and mission objectives create a wonderful and fulfilling order to gameplay.

Rising Sun is but the first chapter in what EA is ambitiously lining up for gamers, with a follow up due later in 2004. The idea, as we've been told, is for the two games to link up – story wise – creating a grander gaming experience, something that should keep fans waiting for the next game with fervour - anticipation beyond simply wanting to play the next instalment in the series. Loosely, the game's story has you playing as Joe Griffin, alongside his brother, Donny, until you're separated. When the next game arrives in 2004, you'll pick up the game as Donny, playing from where he and his brother were separated, and events from *Rising Sun* will have effects in the follow-up. It's an interesting idea, that, if anything, could be marred by the time-frame between the two games, and the winding up of this generation of consoles, but, EA has been in the business long enough that we should probably trust their judgement. Given the popularity of the series, it could be a very, very smart marketing move.

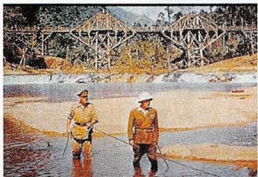
PSW'S TOP 5 WWII MOVIES

THIS IS PSW'S DEFINITE WAR MOVIE LIST. AND YES, WE KNOW BAND OF BROTHERS WAS ON TV. GEE, IT MUST HAVE BEEN PRETTY GOOD TO MAKE THE MOVIE LIST. PHEWEE! WOWZO.



5. A BRIDGE TOO FAR

Directed by Richard Attenborough and starring Sean Connery, Anthony Hopkins and Robert Redford, *A Bridge Too Far* was an eye-opening film that showed the ineptitude of people that knew nothing about combining allied forces, using proper reconnaissance or arranging complete battle and stealth tactics. A great film with a stellar cast, not to be missed.



4. THE BRIDGE ON THE RIVER KWAI

Directed by David Lean, *The Bridge on the River Kwai* is a prisoner of war film that shows a group of allied POWs forced to build a railway bridge for their Japanese captors, however, the POWs don't know the allied forces are planning to blow it up! Stars Alec Guinness and William Holding.



3. THE DAM BUSTERS

Directed by Michael Anderson, *The Dam Busters* is a thrilling movie based on true events of the British Airforces ingenious bomb designs created for destroying German dams. The end sequence is said to be an inspiration for the *Star Wars* Deathstar trench at the end of Episode IV,



2. SAVING PRIVATE RYAN

Steven Spielberg's haunting vision recreates war more realistically than any other film in history. Starring Tom Hanks and Tom Sizemore, *Saving Private Ryan* was an experience that showed the true horrors in graphic detail, a film that changed the face of war movies forever.



1. BAND OF BROTHERS

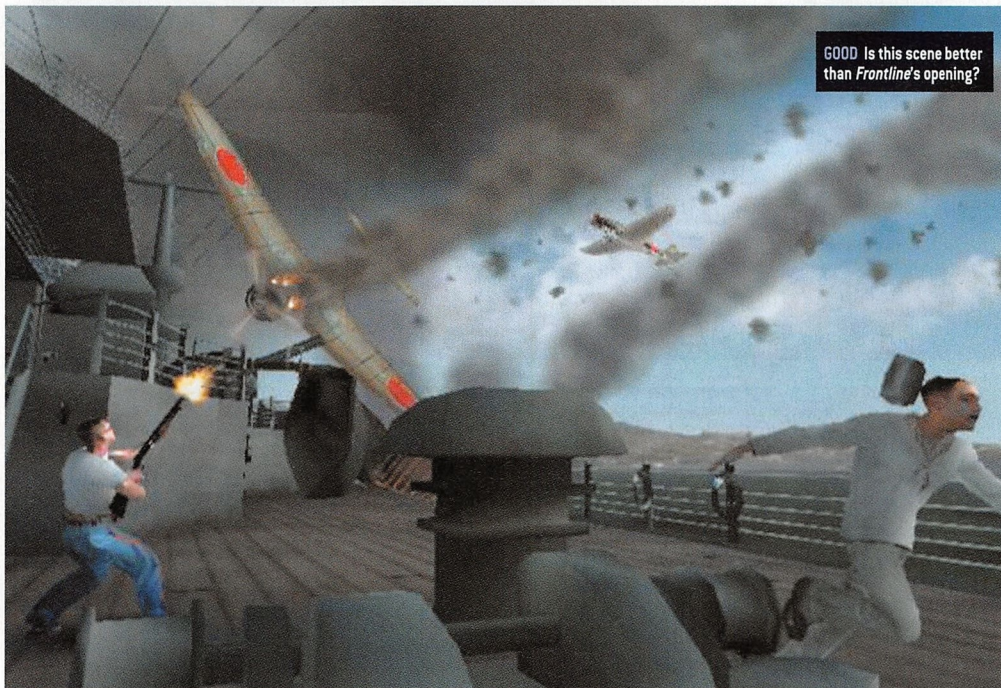
It's not a film, we know, but it's still the best representation of World War II to-date, and with more than eight hours of storytelling at their disposal, producers Steven Spielberg and Tom Hanks we allowed to pace the series beautifully. An artistic and brilliant depiction of war and its many casualties. A perfect collectors item for any WWII buff.



MOZZIE BITES POLES The amputees could at last scratch.



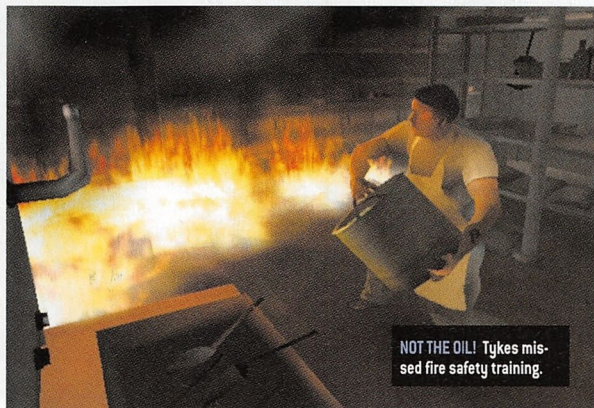
STAMPY After a career on TV, Stampy moved into games.



GOOD Is this scene better than Frontline's opening?



FOGGING It couldn't be a frame-rate enhancer?



NOT THE OIL! Tykes missed fire safety training.



MEDAL OF HONOR RISING SUN

FACT!

> AS REAL AS IT GETS
Expect to feel like you're really at war, everything about and around you will explode, shoot or die.

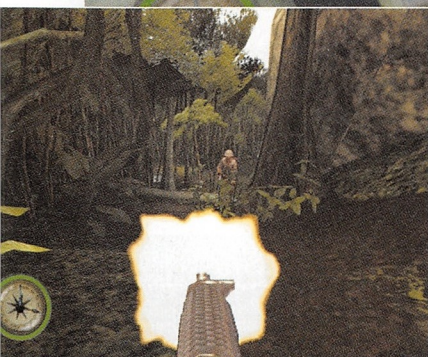
> WAR DELAY
Rising Sun's release date has recently slipped back to December. Don't delay any more! Santa's waiting.

> PAY RESPECT
Like all other *MoH* games, *Rising Sun* features no blood or guts. Respect the veterans, EA request.

> ONLINE BABY!
10 levels for 4 player, 2 player co-op mode and an online component that is yet to be fully revealed. Tasty!



“CHARACTERS ARE USED TO OPEN UP A MUCH BROADER PLOT”



DRAGONS, TIGERS AND PANDA BEARS...OH MY

As mentioned earlier, *Rising Sun* begins with the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, a day that will be long remembered in the annals of American patriotism where more than 300 Japanese Naval aircraft attacked and destroyed 21 ships, including eight US battle cruisers. This devastation has been extraordinarily captured in *Rising Sun*, as running through the narrow corridors of the shaking and confused USS California brings home the drama and courage needed to face such circumstances. Fires erupt, live electric cables dangle menacingly and men die, all right before you. A great sense of motion has been captured, with EA LA implementing some amazing graphical effects as motion blurring disorients players, all the while extending the open hand of the suspension of disbelief - offering a chaotic feeling of confusion, desperation and intestinal fortitude. You'll need to help other soldiers as they scurry to save their fellow comrades, and as much of the ship as possible. The goal, however, is to make it topside, which is where the real drama is. Emerging from the ship's hull is a sight to remember as a Japanese fighter jet crashes into the deck, flaying sparks, flames and debris everywhere. Soldiers are flattened in the commotion and the reality of the situation is delivered in full force. One look at the darkened sky, with missile flashes, tracers and exploding aircraft will stop you in your tracks long enough to realise you're being shot at, and in the mix, anyone and everyone is a target. Man a gun turret and stop torpedos from damaging the California anymore than it already is, in between rounds of 'Torpedo Invaders', use your gun to take out the Japanese fighters flying about. Eventually though, the overbearing situation will send you diving until a helping hand extends the saving grace of the beginning of *Rising Sun* and the beginning of the war in the Pacific.

Visually, *Rising Sun* is a leap ahead of its predecessor, *MoH: Frontline*, more realistic character animations, a greater variety of textures, colours and aesthetic trimmings combine to add to the already dramatic realism. AI is smarter now, and the voices used, along with the script, go along way to sinking you into the game. You really feel for some of the characters, and the further into the game you progress, the more you see AI story arcs unfold. Some characters are used to open up a much broader plot, one that offers a diverse and unique look at the war from all perspectives. So it's a good idea to help keep your allies and friends alive for as long as possible.

Enemy AI is as equally good as friendlies, and the Japanese soldiers put up a real fight. They hide amongst anything they can find, often disappearing from sight, only to jump up at the moment of climax lunging at you with bayonets fixed, or katanas in hand. This camouflage idea works for you also though, and crouching amongst leaves and thick foliage with your sniper rifle in hand can be a deadly combination for the enemy and a lot of fun too. Sure, it's war, but who can deny the thrill of sniping in first person shooters, seriously.

While EA LA has gone to great lengths to spice up the reality of the *Medal of Honor* experience, the game isn't without its shortcomings. The preview code we played was far from complete, but EA LA does have some kinks to iron out, namely frame rates, which, at this stage, can be a little choppy. Pop-up tends to bring the 'game' aspect back at inappropriate moments, and weapon collision detection needs a lot of



SATISFACTION Taking these planes down rocks.



SCOUTS Let's just say this is why we never joined scouts.



SUNBURNED Burned to a crisp taken too far.



OLD GUNS What? Is he trying the Gangsta-style hold?



HOWL. *Rising Sun's* new werewolf minigame mode.

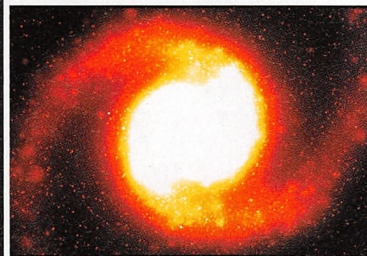


NO TURNING BACK Looks like trouble.



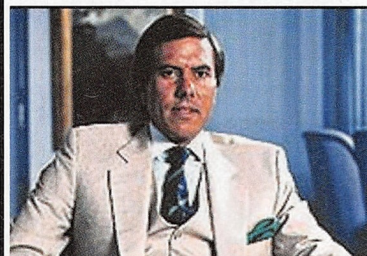
HMM I know they promised close combat but...

OTHER HISTORICAL EVENTS THAT NEED THE GAMING TREATMENT



>> THE BIG BANG!

Let's face it, who wouldn't love the chance to play as a giant lump of gas full of life-creating aspirations? Or you could play as a mega asteroid hell bent on destruction. Or maybe you could even look at being the sun, a giant gaseous ball that gives life with its ultra violet ray special move.



>> CATCH SKASEY!

Create a crack team of elite hunters on the move to catch the elusive Christopher Skase. Go undercover as a nurse in the Skase household to catch him in the act as the oxygen mask comes off and the wheel chair is put away. Or play as Skase himself and use every trick in the book to avoid the Australian authorities, fake illness and become a media mongrel with trashy current affairs programs.

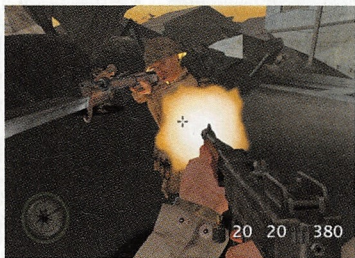


>> SONY PLAYSTATION, THE GAME!

Play as Sony in their climb to the top of the interactive gaming ladder. Be a part of the company that tried to tie themselves to Nintendo only to realise they could go it alone. Watch as you put them in their place during the N64 years. It's a game you could invite Nintendo fanboys around to watch you play, so you can watch them cry!



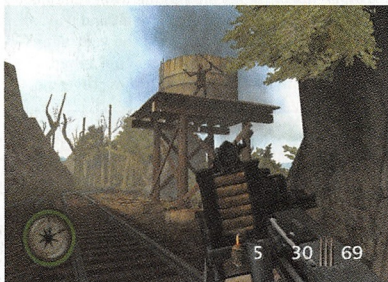
GREAT VIEW This is the new battlefield.



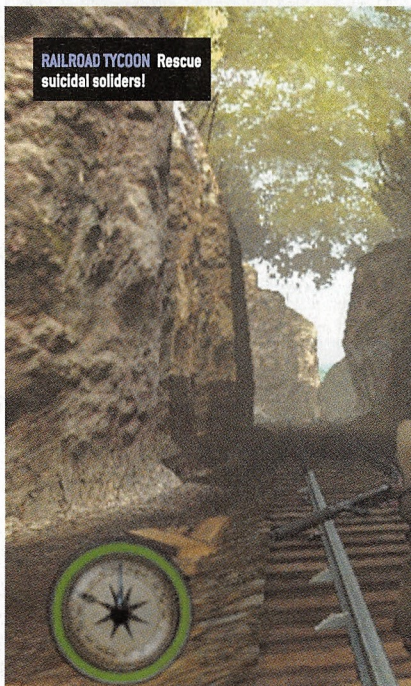
OVERDOSE COMBAT Sure, it's a good image but...



LIGHTSABER BAYONET Secret WWII weapon trials.



THE GAUNTLET There's no you in Pearl Harbor.



RAILROAD TYCOON Rescue suicidal soldiers!

tweaking. The textures are much better than *Frontline*, but there could have been a little more variety in the jungle levels used. At this stage, which is still not final, the game has a *Turok Evolution* look to it, which should be avoided at all costs. But with all of these misgivings, it's the attention to detail that helps detract players from the gaming limitations of perfect historical recreation, and with the Congressional Medal of Honor Society on hand for technical and sequential information, as well as Capt. Dale Dye, EA's technical advisor since the original *Medal of Honor*, *Rising Sun* feels like an interactive history lesson [Steve means that as a good thing folks - Ed.] The recently announced minor release date delay (it's now due in early December) should guarantee a polished product when it finally hits our Pacific shores.

IS THAT A WELROD IN YOUR POCKET?

There are over 20 WWII weapons available in *Rising Sun*, including the very cool Welrod MkII Silent Pistol, a one shot handgun that looks more like a pipe bomb, or at least something you could construct from materials at your local Bunnings. It was a special pistol used by the SOE [Special Operations Executives] from WWII, and is but one example of the authenticity involved in the makings of *Rising Sun*. Other historical attributes include particular mission objectives, and overall mission intentions. Nothing has been overlooked and every mission is based on real events that transpired during the battle of the Pacific. As Joe, you'll lead a midnight task force on a raid on the Guadalcanal, go undercover in Singapore to uncover secrets and movements of Japanese forces, go in search of Yamashita's hidden cache of gold and even destroy the bridge over the River Kwai. It's an amazing line up of missions, each with varying objectives and multiple paths to break up gameplay, and it's this approach that helps *Rising Sun* achieve adventure game status as opposed to being a straight up shooter.

There are 10 levels in all, and five major missions that span across the shifting environments. Objectives will change on the move and the narrative for *Rising Sun* is always heavily apparent throughout. The chronological order of things and EA's delivery in this department is spot on, *Rising Sun* never rushes you to the finish line, and delivers a grand gaming experience. The music score alone is film-worthy, and perhaps beyond. The aural output throughout is absolutely stunning, and further envelopes players in a chaotic world of mismatched ideas and human emotion. It's evident from the outset that, like the *MoH* games before it, *Rising Sun* is a labour of love for EA LA.

The good news for PS2 owners this time around, is the inclusion of multiplayer mayhem in four player split-screen deathmatching, two player co-operative play and an online feature which is yet to be fully revealed. The multiplayer component, so far, is very promising, with the frame-rate bane being the only mark against the good name of *Rising Sun*, but again, our code is only partially complete.

At this stage, everything is looking great for *Medal of Honor Rising Sun*; EA LA has broached all of the problems players had with *Frontline* and gone above and beyond to deliver an all-round amazing game, one full of respect, fun, devotion and opulence. Stay tuned for plenty more in the coming issues of *PSW*.

/STEPHEN FARRELLY



DRAMA, ACTION! Hundreds of planes fly overhead.

ON POINT, ON PATROL, ONLINE

RISEING SUN JOINS THE INTERNET REVOLUTION. HERE'S HOW...



> EIGHT ONLINE PLAYERS

Okay, so eight's not that many. But when the other seven are baying for your blood and you've just run out of ammo, you'll be glad that's all there is. Well, that's what we're imagining in our dumb heads, anyway. Don't spoil the anticipation for us, eh?



> VOICE CHAT

Unlike certain other shooters we could mention, but choose not to, *Rising Sun's* Online mode will feature proper talking-type interaction with your fellow fighters. No 'hilarious' accents when playing as the Japanese, please. Oh, go on then.



> THREE GAME MODES

Again, not exactly innovative, but with Deathmatch, Team Deathmatch and Capture the Flag you've got your three essential challenges. Can you imagine if the whole of World War II had been fought in Deathmatch mode? It would have been *wicked*.*

*Alright, not wicked. Because only one soldier would have been left at the end and he'd be the ruler of the free world. So maybe "mindbendingly stupid" would be a better phrase.

EAST IS BEST

FORGET SOGGY EUROPE, JUNGLE WARFARE IS SO IN SEASON, BABY

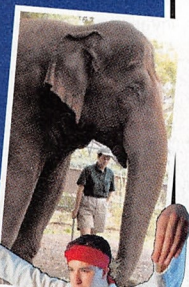


OUT > Taking the Germans heroically by surprise at Normandy
IN > Taking the Americans villainously by surprise at Pearl Harbor

OUT > Rain-drenched, mud-filled trenches
IN > Rain-drenched, mud-filled jungles



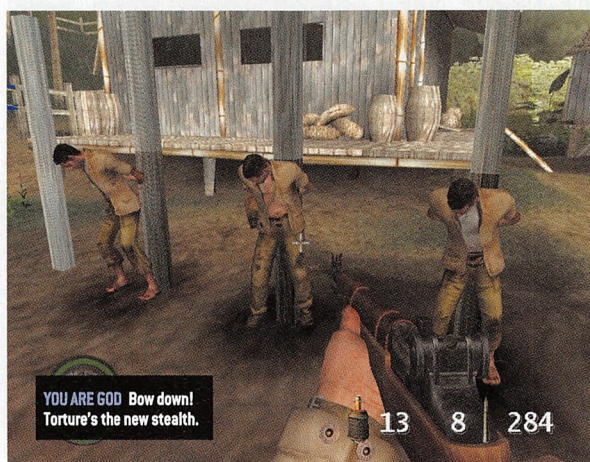
OUT > Blowing Panzer tanks to bits with grenade launchers
IN > Blowing elephants. To bits, we mean. And actually riding them...



OUT > Strong lager, VW Beetles, bratwurst, Jurgen Klinsmann, lederhosen
IN > Hari-kari, noodles, Mr Shaky Hand Man, egg fried rice, karate etc...



GREAT SKY The prettiest part of *Rising Sun*.



YOU ARE GOD Bow down! Torture's the new stealth.

13 8 284



> BAD BOYS

Undercover brothers in arms get ready to send some terrorist scum to the Big House.

“GET YOUR PUNK
ASS DOWN ON
THE FLOOR, BITCH!”

SWAT: GLOBAL STRIKE TEAM

IN A WORLD GONE MAD, WHERE TERROR IS RIFE AND CRIME IS RAMPANT, AT LEAST WE’LL ALWAYS HAVE A GUN-HAPPY DIVISION OF THE POLICE TO RELY ON.

> GENRE	SHOOTING
> DEVELOPER	ARGONAUT
> PUBLISHER	VIVENDI
> ONLINE	NO
> ETA	NOVEMBER

WELCOME TO THE FUTURE. WELCOME TO THE year 2016, a time when everyday life in the western world stands on the brink of collapse. A time when rival street gangs fight bloodthirsty wars on the street, a time when terrorists are slowly poisoning a decent, clean-living population with a powerful new designer drug known as Spike, a time when – horror of horrors – Neighbours reigns supreme as the most popular program on TV thanks to a re-animated, cybernetically enhanced Helen Daniels. It is, in all honesty, a shitty time to be alive.

But there may be hope. Created in 2008 to combat the ever-growing threat to world peace, the SWAT Global Strike Team are a group of men and women dedicated to crushing world crime and its instigators. Descended from America's famous law enforcement agency, they are committed to keeping the twin SWAT ideals of kicking down front doors and heavy-handed jurisdiction. To put it simply: watch out bad guys, the SWAT: GST guys are about.

Which is perhaps a slightly over-dramatic way of saying welcome to Vivendi's new team-based first-person shooter. Mixing fast-paced arcade action (and by that we mean gunplay and numerous terrorist targets) with tactical planning, *SWAT: GST* is very much a part of the 'new breed' of first-person shooters currently sweeping across PS2. It's got the story elements, it's got the guns, it's got the total carnage that only a properly implemented four-way split-screen Multiplayer mode can bring and it's also got the sort of intelligent, team-based strategy that games like *SOCOM* can only dream of. In short, it's a very interesting prospect indeed.

PROTECT THE INNOCENT

Things begin innocently enough (well, as innocent as any aggravated burglary can be) with a bank raid. It's a standard job – a handful of well-organised thugs, a few bank tellers and security guards held hostage and the odd motion sensitive bomb set up as a booby trap – and it's up to SWAT man Kincaid, the character you'll take control of for the majority of the game, to take care of it along with his tech specialist Jackson [herh - Ed.]. There's a third member of your team as well – vampish sniper Kana Lee – but you won't see her until she makes her fashionably late entrance at the start of mission two.

And so you're off, picking your way through the under siege bank and it's motley crew of law-abusing oppressors. It's here that you'll immediately find yourself getting to grips with SWAT's ingenious system for dishing out orders to your fellow team members. With both analogue sticks safely occupied with the job of moving you through the nicely designed environments it's all down to the directional pad to relay your commands and very comfortable it feels to. Simply place your gun sight across an interactive object, say a door for example, and a list of appropriate actions will appear on screen. In this case it could be a simple case of 'open', or the slightly more brute force option of 'breach door', and all you have to do is tap the directional pad towards the option and your man will step forward and carry out his orders.

It's also possible to give out general orders to your cohorts at any time during the action as well. Again, just tap the directional pad and you'll be presented with the usual range of commands



THUG-U-LIKE They're a motley bunch of balaclava wearing miscreants.



JULIET BRAVO Save her and restrain her – now that's quality gaming for you.



'HAVE AT YOU, YOU FILTHY THUG!'

TEAM UP OR FACE OFF IN THE MULTIPLAYER MODE



> LIKE ALL GOOD FIRST-PERSON SHOOTERS, SWAT: GST comes complete with a plethora of split-screen multiplayer options, although even we were surprised to see how comprehensive development team Argonaut has been.

Standard multiplayer offers several different arenas, numerous characters and a whole gamut of killing devices for up to four like-minded individuals, along with a more than healthy range of game modes beyond straight Deathmatch to keep even the most experimental of gamers happy. Survivor, where characters are eliminated one by one until only one is left standing and Briefcase, where players have to fight over and try to carry a, umm, briefcase, for a set period of time in particular are our favourites.

But it's the co-operative mode that's really impressive, with a massive ten-mission campaign that directly ties into the single-player story. Best of all though, while the environments might be the same as those in the single-player game, the maps are completely different, so it's almost like having two different games in one.

But where are the online options? Where's our chance to shoot down SWAT players from around the world? Sadly, it's not to be and it's shame on you Argonaut for what is clearly a missed opportunity.



GOOD COP BAD COP Is your pal going to kill that thug?



FILTHY FOUR-PLAY Melville's playing in the bottom left.

SWAT: GST FACT

> POLICE, JOYPAD, ACTION! Take a team of three hardcore SWAT members on an adventure through crime. Bad guys need not apply.

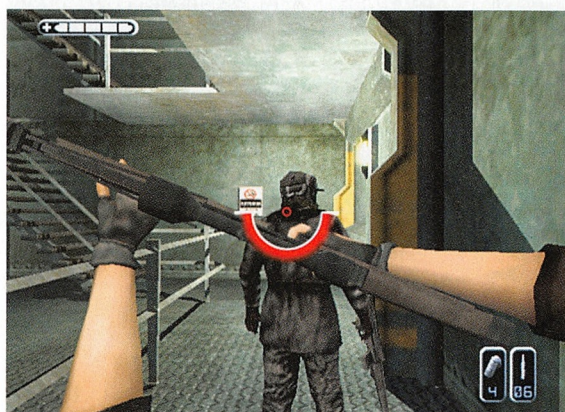
> MEDAL OF HONOUR Collect medals, both good and bad, for rescuing hostages, capturing bad guys and keeping your aggression in check.

> VOICE OF AUTHORITY Dispense orders to your team with the joypad or simply speak them into a compatible USB headset.

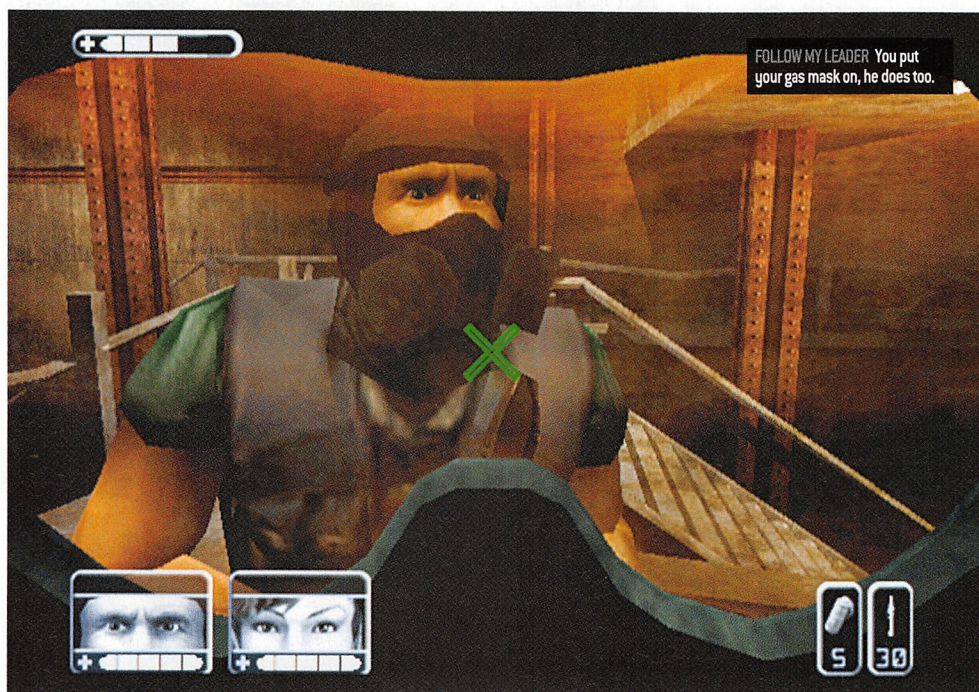
> FANCY A FOURSOME? Take on the massive two-player co-operative campaign or go head-to-head in the four-player Multiplayer mode.



“YOU NEED TO TRY AND SCARE THE CRIMINALS BY SHOUTING VERY LOUDLY”



FIGHT WITH HONOUR Which means no shooting him in the back of the head, alright?



WHAT THE MAKERS SAY

“WE WANTED TO BRING THE TEAM ELEMENT IN, BUT WE WANTED SOMEBODY TO BE ABLE TO JUST PICK UP THE PAD AND RUN AROUND AND START SHOOTING PEOPLE AND I THINK WE’VE CRACKED IT.”

such as ‘follow me’, ‘proceed’ (for when you don’t want to be the first man in the firing line) and ‘secure’. And they say SWAT training takes two years to complete?

OK, so we like the ordering system and the way it lets you feel like you’re in charge of a small strike team, but this is 2003 damn it! Shouldn’t we be talking to our computers by now rather than using outmoded concepts such as hand-based input systems? Well, since you asked, *SWAT: GST* boasts full support for the USB headset more recently seen in *SOCOM*. Just shout your orders and off your men trot. It’ll even recognise alternative words for each of the orders, just in case you get over-excited and start shouting American slang like, ‘Get your punk ass down on the floor, bitch!’ at the screen.

UPHOLD THE LAW

As you progress through the levels, you’ll be treated to short cut-scenes that divulge ever more revealing details of the plot, and with 21 big missions, taking in locations such as London, Paris, Russia and, of course, Crimesville, North America, that’s a lot of plot to plough your way through. Needless to say, mid-level restart points are present in abundance.

Completing the game isn’t necessarily the end for you and your team though, as being a member of SWAT isn’t just about saving the world. It’s about ‘honour’ and ‘justice’ and upholding the SWAT rules of engagement and that’s why at the end of each level you’ll be ranked on your performance and presented with the odd medal or two accordingly. That means not shooting innocents, not shooting the enemy in the back and doing your best to take as many of the bad guys back for questioning as possible.

To do this you’ll need to scare the criminal into giving himself up by shouting very loudly in a very aggressive manner – either by tapping the ‘submission’ button or, more amusingly, screaming ‘DOWN! POLICE!’ into your headset – although a non-lethal shot to the legs or Flash Bang grenade can often make even the most hardy of thugs repent. Of course, if you do decide to style yourself as ‘One Tough Bastard’ who bends the rules to get things done, coshing a hysterical hostage over the head to quiet them down for instance, then a selection of ‘dark’ medals are on offer for those who want to serve up their own style of anti-law enforcement.

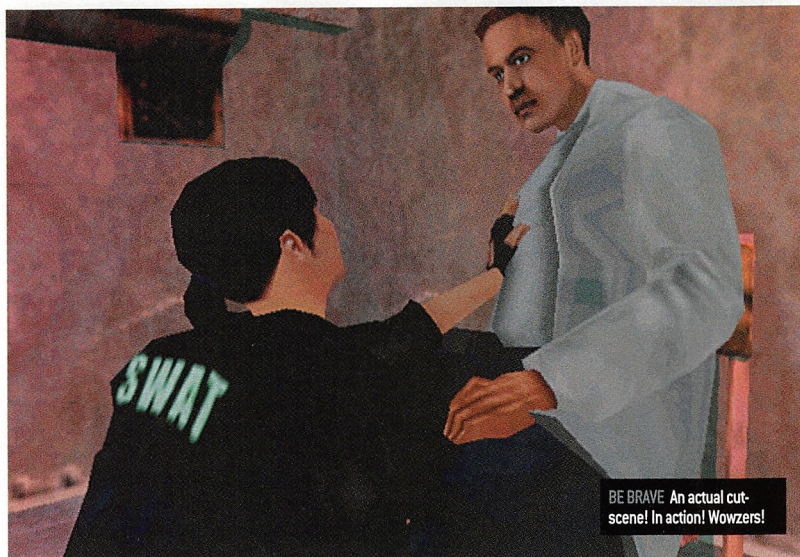
We can’t finish without briefly mentioning the best friend of every paid up member of SWAT, the gun, and this being a first-person shooter you can be certain that the firearms are being given big priority with their own unique experience system. There may only be five types of weapon available – pistol, shotgun, machine gun and assault and sniper rifles – but each can be upgraded in a number of ways using points earned through good performance in previous missions: increasing ammo size and capacity for instance, as well as improving recoil and aiming.

All we need now is for some grizzled old veteran in a sweat-stained blue shirt to hand us our badge with a cheery ‘Welcome to the force, son’. Criminals, you don’t stand a chance.

FIRST OPINIONS

SWAT: Global Strike Team looks like being a solid first-person shooter with an interesting team angle and a well-worked Multiplayer mode. Decent cop-themed games are hard to come by these days, but in this violent, criminal world of *Vice City*s and *Getaways* doing good could be a novel breath of fresh air.

/ MARK ROBINS



BE BRAVE An actual cutscene! In action! Wowzers!



SEEING GREEN As always, night goggles are a must.



STOP! POLICE! Shout at him to scare him into giving up.

TEAM SWAT

THE MEN BEHIND THE MEN OF SWAT. WE TALK TO LEAD DESIGNER PAUL CROCKER AND PRODUCER SEFTON HILL.



PSW: WHY DID YOU CHOOSE TO USE SWAT AS A BASIS FOR A FIRST-PERSON SHOOTER?

SH: We wanted to do a PC-style team-combat game, but streamline it into a console game. We developed it for about a year under the name Kleaners and then Vivendi came along, liked what they saw and offered us the SWAT licence.

PSW: DID YOU HAVE MUCH CONTACT WITH ACTUAL SWAT PEOPLE DURING THE DEVELOPMENT?

PC: We had a day's combat training with SWAT. Anything we do need to know though we can get directly from Vivendi as they've held the SWAT licence for years.

PSW: IS THERE ANYTHING YOU WANTED TO PUT IN BUT THE SWAT PEOPLE SAID 'NO'?

SH: We put some stuff in and the SWAT guys said 'No way!'

PC: And then we left it in...

SH: There's some stuff that SWAT teams do and some they just don't do. Generally speaking, SWAT teams go in fairly mob-handed. So if they've got themselves a warrant to a building they go there in a group of about 18 people and they all just pile in right behind each other and fill up the whole building within two minutes. That wouldn't really make much of a game because you'd be like, the seventeenth man in there. Plus a real SWAT team fires about seven rounds all year. So some of it is based on what SWAT teams do and some of it is based on what people expect SWAT teams to do.

PC: We're trying to be 'Hollywood' SWAT.

PSW: WHERE DID YOU GET YOUR IDEAS FOR THE PLOT? IS ANY OF IT BASED ON REAL-LIFE SITUATIONS?

PC: It's purely fictional because the team doesn't actually exist – the *Global Strike Team* is supposedly the evolution of SWAT – although the game starts off conventionally with a bank raid, which is similar to real life events.

SH: There are a lot of games, like the *Rainbow Six* games, that are based very much on specific events that happened, such as embassy sieges, and we wanted to stay away from things like that. We thought more about the things you see in films rather than real-life events.

PSW: ANTI-TERRORIST GAMES HAVE BEEN ON SHAKY GROUND SINCE SEPTEMBER 11. WAS THERE ANYTHING YOU HAD TO TAKE OUT OF THE GAME DUE TO TASTE?

PC: I went on holiday round about the time of September 11 and we had 18 missions of the game sorted, and then by the time I got back we had to cut out all but four.

SH: September 11 did affect us. You have to be careful with regards to taste. We originally had office blocks levels with huge explosions and the building falling down, but it didn't change the game much to take them out. The game-play didn't change, but some of the back-story did.

PSW: HOW HARD HAS IT BEEN TO DESIGN INTELLIGENT COMPUTER CONTROLLED PARTNERS?

PC: It's taken the best part of three years to do, so it's not been easy.

SH: One of the things that helped us was that we decided early on that we didn't want them to be all-singing all-dancing autonomous characters that would do everything for you and leave you following. We wanted them to be your wingmen, sitting on your shoulder and helping out when they're needed so they never get in your way. These guys follow your lead. They never fire at enemies until you fire.

PSW: HOW COME YOU'VE PUT SO MUCH EFFORT INTO THE TWO-PLAYER CO-OPERATIVE GAME?

PC: It kind of evolved as we went along. Vivendi wanted a Co-operative mode in there and we decided we wanted to do it properly, hence it follows on as a separate component from the Single-player. So you play through a bank in the Single-player levels and you play through the same bank in the Co-op.

SH: We didn't want to add-on a half-arsed multiplayer element. We wanted it to be a big component of the game that people really enjoy, so we added all the game modes, we added all the maps and we put in the Co-op mode as well. It's a big game and you get a lot of it for your money: you can play the 20-hour Single-player campaign and then go off and play the Co-op campaign, which at half the size is still as big as many other full-price games today.

PSW: WHAT ARE YOU MOST PLEASED WITH IN SWAT?

PC: I like the whole feeling of being within the world you're in. You've got stuff going on around you, you've got your team talking to you, the environments look brilliant. I think the whole feeling of creeping round buildings, trying not to get shot, works really well.

SH: I think console games really live or die on whether you can pick up and play it. We wanted to bring the team element in but we wanted someone to be able to pick up the pad and run around and start shooting people and I think we've cracked it.



> SMUTTY COW

Oh come on, it's the whole voyeur-runs-round-with-hidden-camera thing. Come on, you get it, don't you?



“INVOLVING, OPEN AND SOPHISTICATED LIKE A NIGHT-VISION MONOCLE”

BEYOND GOOD & EVIL

PSW SITS IN ON THE BIGGEST GAME OF THE SEASON.
SOMEHOW THE BEST JUST GOT A WHOLE LOT BETTER.

> GENRE	ACTION
> DEVELOPER	UBI SOFT
> PUBLISHER	UBI SOFT
> ETA	NOVEMBER
> ONLINE	NO

FOR THE NEXT TEN OR SO MINUTES YOUR name is Jade, you're a lady journalist (doubtless referred to in internal Ubi Soft memos as being 'sassy') and you live in a lighthouse with an American pig and an extremely camp hologram of South American descent. Don't give up now. You're almost at the point where it starts getting good. Following an assault on your home by a swarm of alien mosquitoes who shit laser beams (see?), you accept a job from a mysterious man in dark shades, who apparently wants you to photograph some wildlife. "If he wants to bone me, he should just ask," you think to yourself, worryingly adopting the mindset, as well as the physical form, of a modern 'You-go-girlfriend' female.

Immediately after you complete the first task – in effect a tutorial in denial – you're 'taken in' by the mysterious man in the shades, who, it transpires, represents a local rebel faction keen to uncover a(nother) government conspiracy concerning the alien activity. And so it goes, with your every success improving your standing within the underground group, who come to look upon you as an agent capable of supplying the photographs that prove they're not just making this whole conspiracy thing up for a laugh. Between missions (we're told there's four in all, each lasting a couple of hours) you're free to wander the streets of the pedestrian area or to sail the waters in your hovercraft, talking to people, upgrading your vehicles and scooping up more cash.

Money can be earned in a number of ways:

1) By killing things during missions; 2) By entering into competitions at the local raceway; and 3) By taking snaps of the local wildlife and mailing them to the laboratory. The last of these is by far the most lucrative, not to mention the most therapeutic; cruising around photographing the many brightly coloured creatures that breathe life into your hometown makes for a relaxing diversion from the brawling and the simple puzzle-solving of the main game. By filling up rolls of film you can earn new pieces of equipment for your camera – a more powerful zoom, for example – that allow you to take better photos of rarer creatures for bigger paycheques (see panel).

YOU AND A PIG

The missions are mainly carried out in pairs. You begin with Jade, the woman, and Pey', the [makes invisible quote marks as if to say "we're being sarcastic now"] 'wise-cracking' talking pig. You control only Jade, but can issue simple orders to your partner with a single tap of the triangle button. "Use your wire-cutters to open that grate, you throwback to the dark ages of interactive entertainment when talking farmyard animals were considered either, A) original or B) amusing," you might say to him. Or, "Fire up those rocket boots and propel me onto that ledge up there, or I'll lecture you at length about how you represent all that is bad in the world of video game character design." The system works perfectly. You get all the companionship and camaraderie that comes with being a part of a team without the headache of having to switch between characters and constantly child-mind them into position.

Your team-mates are slightly less helpful when it comes to combat, however. Sure, >



BEYOND GOOD & EVIL FACT!

> THAT GIVES ME THE HORN

Think the talking pig is bad? Wait until you see the Rastafarian rhinos who work at the garage.

> THAT'S JUST CREEPY

We've played the later levels, which involve a heavy amount of stealth, and they're really tough.

> TIME GENTLEMAN PLEASE

Beyond Good & Evil's Jade engine is also being used for *Prince Of Persia: The Sands Of Time*.

> OH, THE HUMANITY!

The toilets at the developer's HQ smelt so bad we had to cover our mouth with our jumper.



CYLON-ESQUE The evil guards are just awesome.



PR SPIN Sassy? Chic? Whatever. She'll do us.

PSW'S GUIDE TO PRACTICAL PHOTOGRAPHY



YOU'LL NEED TO BE PRETTY HANDY WITH YOUR NIKON IF YOU'RE TO SURVIVE BEYOND GOOD & EVIL. HERE ARE OUR TOP FIVE TIPS...

TIP 1 > Always make sure you're close up to the subject. The lab will only pay you for images that clearly show the creature in question, so make full use of the zoom.



TIP 2 > Unlike sex with ugly women, in photography you always need to see the face. The shot here – the back of the talking pig's head – earns you nothing.



TIP 3 > As a basic rule of thumb, the more repulsive the beast, the more money you'll earn. Be sure to grab a quick snap of any end-of-level bosses you encounter.



TIP 4 > Your camera can also be used to spy on shady characters, like this chap, who's sitting in front of a code to a nearby secret room. It's also worth photographing maps.



TIP 5 > A couple of hours into the game you're rewarded with an upgrade that allows you to fire discs from your camera. Use these to distract and confuse your enemies.



HAVE YOU SCENE IT? A lot of time is spent exploring the world.



DIRTY GIRL The camera is your most powerful weapon.



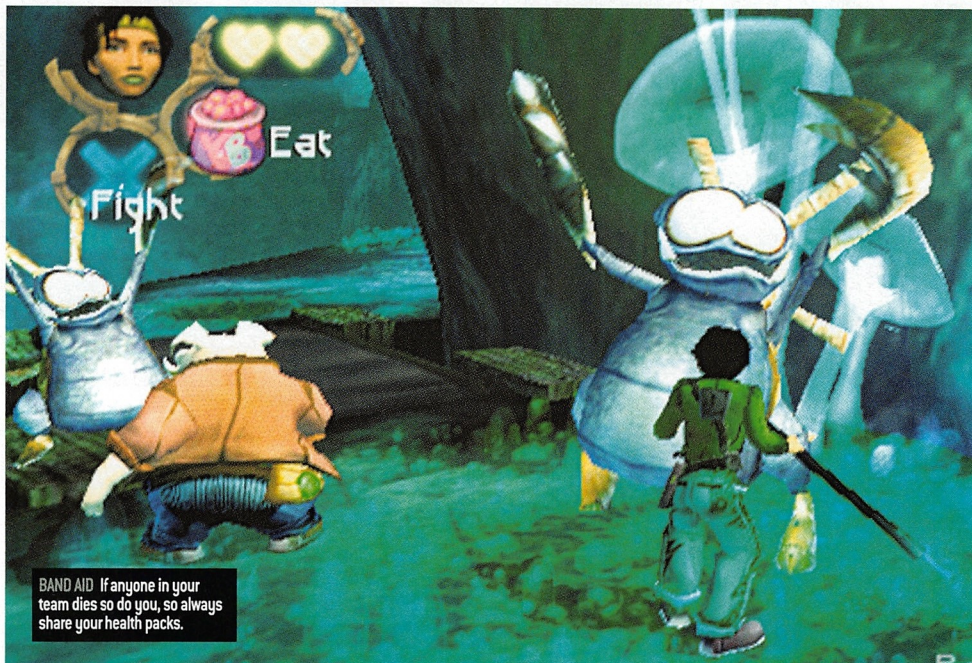
CRAFTY You can beef up your hovercraft at the garage.



GOOD GOING Once freed, this chap will join your team.



PURE EVIL Tired of following orders? Nab one of these and just fanny around for a bit.



BAND AID If anyone in your team dies so do you, so always share your health packs.

they're more than keen to weigh in to the melee, but often they get cornered and call on you for help. You die if they do, so you have to make sure that you never let them stray too far and that you hand over any excess health packs you're carrying when their energy levels are running low.

CONTROL AND VISION

There are two things in particular that please us about *Beyond Good & Evil*. The first is the visual tone. Not only is it a game that looks nice, it's a game that looks unique, a game that looks only like itself. Cut-scenes that would otherwise be pushed aside in a mad scramble to get to the fighting bits are instead watched and enjoyed. And this isn't only because at present there's no option to skip them. It's because the Ubi Soft team responsible for *Beyond Good & Evil* (headed by one Michel Ancel, the millionaire creator of the *Rayman* series) appreciates that there's no use having a decent story unless it's well told. For this reason, every aspect of the cinematics – from the character models and the special effects to the music and the dialogue – has been cared for like a premature baby.

It's immediately apparent from the opening sequence, in which we see the mosquito invasion from a number of inventive angles, that the *Beyond Good & Evil* team has one eye on the TV hooked up to the PS2 and the other on the movie screen. We know this because we've been to the developer's rustic hideaway in the slowly-beating heart of sleepy Montpellier and we've seen the scores of Hitchcock posters papering the walls. They have good taste in films and it shows.

The second thing that pleases us is the controls, for *Beyond Good & Evil's* interface is remarkably refined. The X button handles pretty much everything you need: all the fighting – the kicking, the punching, the swiping, the cartwheeling – plus the talking and the majority of the actions required for the puzzles.

Brilliantly, Jade also takes care of all of her own stunts, automatically leaping chasms, inching around tight ledges and high-wire walking along narrow platforms without being asked. None of which is to suggest that *Beyond Good & Evil* is in any way simple. It isn't – it's sophisticated like a night-vision monocular. It's just that the developer has quite wisely chosen to hack away all of the unnecessary commands and controls that make adventure games like *Tomb Raider: The Angel Of Darkness* such an intolerable drag. So what we're left with is an adventure title that refuses to punish you for not being able to pin down its squirming control interface. How refreshing.

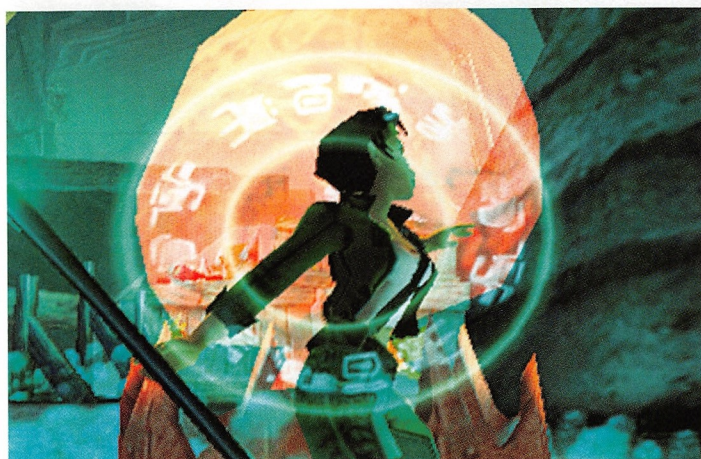
FIRST OPINIONS

We'd heard garbled whispers from unreliable sources that *Beyond Good & Evil* might be one of 2003's surprise hits, but we didn't believe them. As much as we hate to say it, turns out that they were right and that we, in fact, were wrong. It's an open and extremely charming action title with a solid blend of playing styles and an involving story line that's supported to the max by some truly engaging cut-scenes. Suffice to say, *Jak II: Renegade* and *Ratchet and Clank* (the game we've hilariously renamed 'Scratch it and W...' actually forget that) have serious cause for concern here. Because *Beyond Good & Evil* could well be the nicest surprise we've had since the brilliant *Primal*. We live in hope.

/ JON BROWN

WHAT THE MAKERS SAY

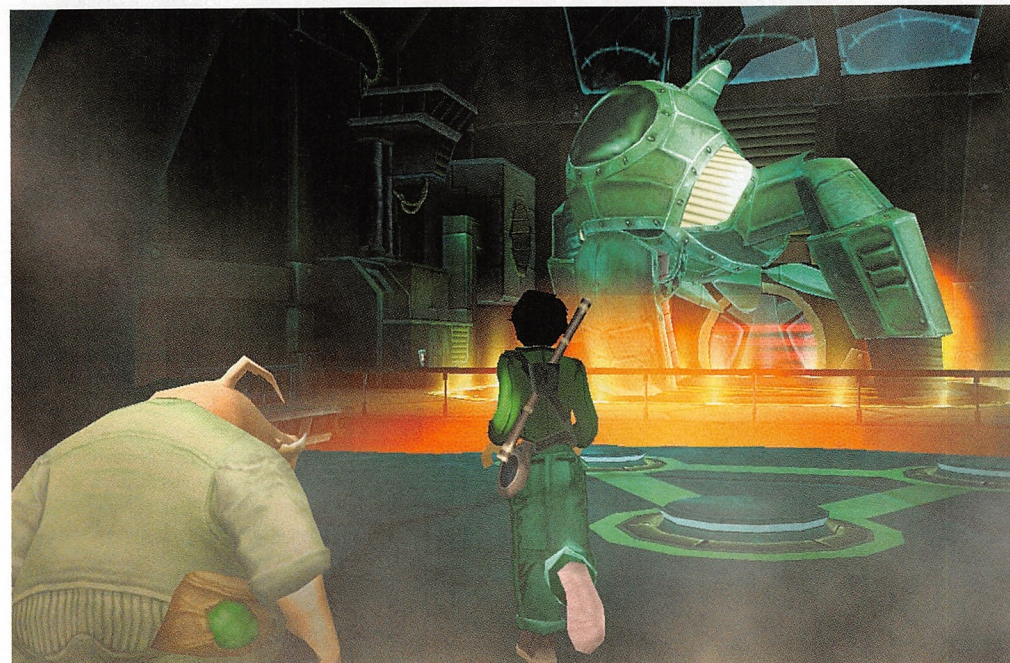
"WHAT PROPELS *BEYOND GOOD & EVIL* INTO THE UPPER ECHELON OF NEXT-GENERATION GAMES IS NOT ONLY THE ENGROSSING STORYLINE, BUT THE PROMISE OF DISCOVERY. WE'VE CREATED A WORLD WITH NO BOUNDS."



"EVERY ASPECT OF THE CINEMATICS HAS BEEN CARED FOR LIKE A PREMATURE BABY"



ROYALTIES It doesn't get any more *Prince Of Persia* than this.



ALPHA SECTION What a silly idea that is. Terminate them!



HOVER BOYS Like crossing Bass Strait. But less shit.

BEYOND GOOD & EVIL EXPOSED

STILL NOT SURE WHAT TO EXPECT? ALLOW PSW TO BREAK IT DOWN...



40% – Pulling switches, opening doors and fighting odd-shaped creatures in an effort to complete one of the four main missions that make up the spine of the game.



20% – Using your camera to either photograph the wildlife for extra spending money or to make copies of highly-sensitive documents for your pay masters. Smile.



20% – Running around talking to people in an effort to find out what you're supposed to be doing next. Luckily, the locals can usually point you in the right direction.



10% – Wandering aimlessly enjoying the atmosphere of the city. It's one of those games that lets you just drift and discover until you can be bothered to get back to work.



10% – Entering your hovercraft in races down at the hover-racing track. Don't expect *Gran Turismo 4*, but the competition is tough and the tracks are fairly decent.



> WINDING ROAD

You should've stuck to the motorway. Short cuts never save you time. It'll be dark soon.

"CAREER SIDEWAYS OVER A BRIDGE TOWARDS A GROUP OF INNOCENT BYSTANDERS"

WRC3

SONY SPENDS BIG TO BRING EVERY TINY DETAIL FROM THE LAST RALLY SEASON INTO YOUR HOME. YOU'VE NEVER HAD IT SO REAL.

> GENRE	RACING
> DEVELOPER	EVOLUTION STUDIOS
> PUBLISHER	SONY
> ETA	NOVEMBER
> ONLINE	NO

HEAR THAT RUMBLE IN THE DISTANCE?

That's the sound of a million billion teenagers in baseball caps running to the shops to buy *Colin McRae 4*. Or *Colin McRae 04*, to give it its proper, fashionably designed by a bunch of marketing gurus at prohibitive expense, name. And fair dos, kudos and maximum respect goin' out to them youths for it too, as *Colin 04* does indeed look mighty fine. But then so does this. Friends, we are living through the golden years of rallying video games.

WRC3 is your official, approved, licensed and endorsed option. It is, so the makers say at every opportunity, "The official game of the FIA World Rally Championship." So if you want the right logos, if you always pay an extra 10p for the superior Heinz variety, this is the rally game you're looking for. Thanks to Sony's numerous marketing pounds, rights have been purchased and deals signed to feature all of the 2003 rally season's races, sponsor logos, drivers and the new vehicles that debuted in the recent series. *WRC3*, so its creators hope, is where people that want authenticity with their driving are going to go.

It should also be where people who want pretty little effects will want to go. We're assured that thanks to "shrapnel particle emitters" the cars will smash like never before, with glass and bits of metal (or Teflon, or whatever it is they make cars out of these days) flying about should you inadvertently drive your car into a crash barrier at 80 miles per hour.

Gravel and dust fly everywhere as you career sideways over a bridge towards a group of 20 innocent spectators, your car leaves tyre imprints as it goes, and, call us anal, but we're particularly loving the cars' double shadow effects. A dark area permanently lives beneath your motor, plus there's a secondary shadow that moves as your car changes position. It looks good, and we don't care if you're laughing at us for noticing.

SURFACE AREAS

Roads aren't just roads. This is rallying, the vehicular equivalent of putting on your wellies and tramping through angry farmers' fields then walking through the kitchen up to your bedroom. There's gravel, mud, snow, and many more different-feeling surfaces to further challenge your driving skills and tread into the carpet when you get home. Couple this with intertwined routes with bridges, rivers and all-round more exciting scenery and you're facing a much tougher and more interesting race experience than before. Which, into the bargain, makes it much more important to listen to the pace notes this time. If the man says it's an easy left over a river, he's not joking.

The best feature of *Colin McRae 03*? The one thing that had us all looking at it and going 'wow!' all the time? It was the water. The rain on the screen, those little droplets and the smeary paths left by the windscreen wipers. Just thinking about them gets us all tingly and emotional. From what we've seen of *WRC3* it's equally as packed with those realistic touches we all love so much.

"We've got reflective and opaque water, specular lighting, enhanced particle effects, >



WRC 3 FACT!

> IN 1978, IAN REALISED THAT...
A whole biog section featuring the drivers' personal histories has been added. We probably won't read it.

> IN 1987, FORD INTRODUCED...
Behind-the-scenes videos of the rally teams are included for the detail-obsessed fan. We might watch them.

> "WHOA THERE, STEVE!"
As well as telling you where to go, you co-driver now reacts to your driving. "Nice corner," he might say.

> WE NEED MORE POWER
WRC 'Car Evolutions' are in the game, offering a tuned, higher power, more game-friendly super-charged option.



IT'S BEHIND YOU Dustier than your grandad's wallet.



BOX QUOTE "Superb dust effects" – PlayStation World.



V COOL Reminds us of Sega Rally. Life's just not fair.



SEE ME Now with facial expressions. Look. Closer.



DELIGHT-FULL Us, in Turkey. We thought it was all sand.

THE NEXT STAGE

SO WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN WRC2 AND WRC3?



THE CRASHES

Thanks to a whole lot of stuff that we don't really understand, the crashes in WRC3 are far more believable – far meatier – than anything seen in the previous games. We've already spent hours of our life steaming into trees.



MORE CARS

If there was one criticism of WRC2 it was that the developer scrimped somewhat when it came to the cars. Sure, there were plenty to be unlocked, but who can be bothered with that? WRC3 has over 20 from the outset.



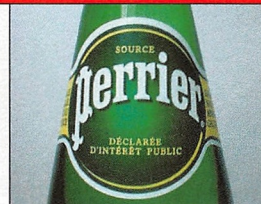
THE RALLY SCHOOL

In which the best teachers in the land guide you through a number of highly informative tutorials. (NB – Actual teachers wear overalls and not suspenders. And they don't have breasts. They have balls. Two of them.)



THE DRIVER'S FACES

Watch the replay and you'll be able to see the gurning face of your driver through the windscreen. That's not a photo of a real rally driver, if we're honest. It's some bloke we just happened to find on the internet who looks a bit like little Johnny.



THE WATER

Vitally important this one. Nothing looks quite as good as the water in WRC3. Not even real water. Not even the water in Beyond Good & Evil. Nothing. If you're the kind of person who buys a bottle of water just to look at it, pre-order WRC3 today.



HARD LEFT The new Test Track lets you brush up on your ice-handling skills.



TWINNED WITH COLIN 04 WRC3 has "more signs" according to its makers.



BENDER WRC3 also has more corners. It must have, right?



YES. WE ARE The Rally of Turkey. We're winning. You can't tell, but trust us. We are. By miles.

ground rush objects, and animating trackside objects," says the game's co-designer Simon Barlow on the science behind why *WRC3* is going to be the sexiest-looking rally game of all.

"Imagine hurtling through an Australian stage and being able to see individual flowers and clumps of grass," he dreams, "or winding your way alongside an Argentine railway line only to see a train pass in the opposite direction. And the skiers on Monte Carlo are definitely an interesting twist!"

Some of the scenic views are incredible. Peek over the side of one of the Monte Carlo mountain courses and you're able to see the road zig-zagging off into the hazy distance. The new Rally of Turkey is particularly fine. This hilly course generates some great views too, plus the cloud of mud that bellows up around your car as you smash the dirty Turkish roads shows that PS2 is not too old to show us sexy new tricks. Apparently, you can even see the look on your driver's face and enjoy the glaze of sheer terror in his eyes from the right angle. We couldn't see it. But it's in there.

CARS. MORE CARS. THERE IS ONLY CARS

There are 21 cars in the game, a similar number to *Colin 04* as it happens, but *WRC3* offers more options and alterations. Tuned versions of the official motors are in the game, along with five 'concept' rally cars – some non-rallying vehicles made over in a body-kitted, lowered, toughened, safety-barred rally style. Forty-eight different varieties are promised in all, which is more than enough for the likes of you.

The makers are keen to emphasise *WRC3*'s use of the 'world' concept. You're not just hammering down a slightly bendy line of tarmac and mud, you're meant to feel like you're going through real places, real towns, and trying to run over real people. The scenery 'goes back' further, with more local buildings plopped about the place to make it look more vibrant. Other roads branch off your compulsory route, more bridges and tunnels help provide thrills, and with a four-player race mode it should provide enough excitement to keep us going until *Colin 05* and *WRC4* arrive next autumn.

New in this year's WRC is the Rally Licensing school, featuring a skidpan for pretending you're Jacques Villeneuve showing off to impress girls, plus a snow section for rehearsing spinning off the road and crashing through 180-degrees into some trees. Here you're also taken through the game's License Tests – you need to earn yourself a WRC License if you want to get away from the Quick Start arcade races and Time Trials, and start piling through the immense challenge of the WRC Championship. More to do? That's progress.

With *WRC3* imminent and *Colin Zero-Four* very much available in the shops, it's never been a better time to be a fan of sliding expensive cars into trees. *Colin 04* may have the big star, but *WRC3* has the full power of officialdom on its side. Both games look great, proving that there's only one real winner in this insane battle to produce great rally games – you.

FIRST OPINIONS

So many good-looking rally games, so little time to play good-looking rally games. With *Colin 04* and a new *Gran Turismo* standing outside the shop making us scared to walk past, *WRC3* needs to go some to impress and carve a niche for itself. Luckily, with a superb look and the full power of the official WRC cars, races and drivers, its niche is looking wide and ready for love.

/ GARY CUTLACK

WHAT THE MAKERS SAY

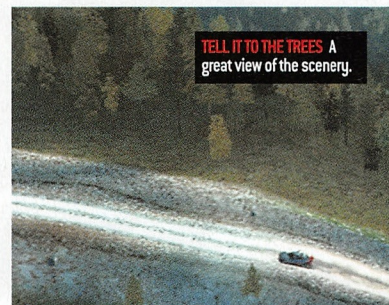
"EMBRACING THEIR THIRD WRC GAME, EVOLUTION STUDIOS HAVE ACCOMPLISHED MANY TECHNICAL ACHIEVEMENTS THAT FURTHER ENHANCE THE GRIT AND REALISM OF THE RALLY EXPERIENCE."



GET HOOKED Yep, just like they say – start out on green, always end up on brown.



STANDARD ICE WORLD After this one it's the lava course.



TELL IT TO THE TREES A great view of the scenery.

“PEEK OVER THE MOUNTAIN COURSE AND SEE THE ROAD ZIG-ZAGGING INTO THE DISTANCE”



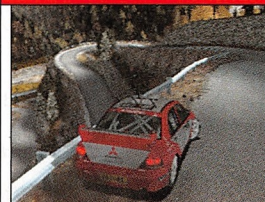
TRUE GRIT Gravel. Individual lumps of it. That's good.



BIG COUNTRY A beautiful postcard from Turkey.

IS THAT FRANCE?

IMMENSE DISTANCES GALORE! SEE FOR MILES, WATCH THE ROADS WIND OFF AS WRC3 IMPRESSES WITH ITS INCREDIBLE LACK OF THAT TROUBLESOME 'POP UP' PROBLEM



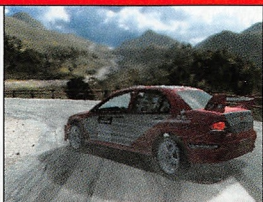
Check that out. You'll be driving down there soon. Who needs a passenger telling you to turn left when you can clearly see all of the road in the distance that well? Left, left, right, left, right, left – co-driver, you're sacked.

HOW FAR CAN YOU SEE?
Down its throat and right to its toes.



The hills! The distance! That green path winding off to the right will shortly be alive with the sound of an engine going VRRROOOAAAHMMMMMM along it. Surely no other race game has ever shown you this much?

HOW FAR CAN YOU SEE?
That pointy bit is the Eiffel Tower.



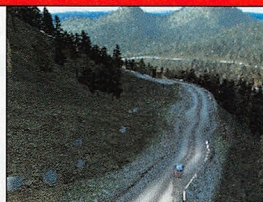
You may well be turning left right now, but a quick heads-up reveals your true destiny – all the way over there. Then further. Then over another hill. Then along a bit more. Then around to the left again. Crikey, it's good.

HOW FAR CAN YOU SEE?
Further than Mystic Meg's lottery predictions.



Here we are in Turkey, one of the new rallies added for the 2003 season. See the road. See all of the road. In fact, you can see pretty much all of Turkey in this shot. Feel your PS2 sweating under the power demands.

HOW FAR CAN YOU SEE?
The echo of the Big Bang at the edge of the Universe.



Are you getting the idea yet? Have you worked out what we're trying to subtly hint at? We're saying YOU CAN SEE REALLY FAR INTO THE DISTANCE IN WRC3. That's our point. Look at that car. It looks like an ant's car.

HOW FAR CAN YOU SEE?
Footprints on the surface of the moon.



> ROW OF TENTS

No camp vamps in *Lament* though. Just whips. And kick-ass subweapons.

“TO THE 11TH CENTURY
AND THE VERY FIRST
DRAC-BAITING MEMBER”

CASTLEVANIA: LAMENT OF INNOCENCE

IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME COMING, BUT THE SERIES HAS RISEN
FROM THE GRAVE. MAKE OURS A MISTER WHIPPY, PLEASE...

> GENRE	PLATFORM ADVENTURE
> DEVELOPER	KONAMI
> DISTRIBUTOR	ATARI
> ONLINE	NO
> ETA	JANUARY

THERE'S NOTHING BETTER THAN SEEING AN old friend again after years spent apart. Unless they've turned into a shabby crack-addled drunk who's desperate for free money to spend on booze and hookers, of course. But that isn't the case with our old mate *Castlevania*, we fervently hope. The venerable series has accompanied us through every generation of console gaming, and it's great to see it pop up on the PS2 as a fully-fledged 3D action-adventure title.

We've only seen *Castlevania* in its, admittedly high-quality, Game Boy Advance incarnations in the last few years, so it'll be interesting to see what the world will make of the second title in the vampire-hunting series to make it into 3D (the first was on the Nintendo 64. Let's never speak of it again). This time, we're going all the way back to the eleventh century (wooh!) to the very first Dracula-baiting member of the Belmont clan, called Leon, who must journey through a perilous forest to Dracula's castle to rescue his lover, Sara. As well as that hallowed whip, you'll get access to five subweapons that will be reassuringly familiar to anyone who's played older versions of the game: holy water, axes, daggers, crosses and the crystal.

Expect a classic mixture of jumping and frenetic combat, transferred into the third dimension with the minimum of fuss and bother. Unlike many of the previous *Castlevania* titles, you won't have to plough through roomfuls of enemies to open up new areas. Instead, five separate ways into the castle mean that you can explore different environments, hopefully from the word go. The Cathedral will see you journeying through the spires, crypts and graveyards of the castle's cursed church. The Alchemist's Laboratory sees you taking on all manner of hideous magic-spawned beasties, while the Garden will doubtless feature maze-like passages and the odd carnivorous plant or two. The Dungeon will contain a number of sightless, clammy creatures intent on ripping out your throat, while the Theatre – we can't quite work out what's in the theatre. Demon popcorn? Evil safety curtains? We'd better wait and see.

Given that one of the highlights of *Castlevania* has always been the bosses, we're hoping for some big dirty bastards to beat up in all areas of the castle. If you missed the game's teaser trailer, then you missed seeing a gigantic stone golem in action as well as a terrifying floating medusa head, complete with gigantic snakes for hair. Enemies right now include demons, your classic walking dead and the mermen that inexplicably always find the Count's castle the best place to set up home. With such a similar plot and visuals, people are bound to compare this to *Devil May Cry*, but we're betting on much more of a platform-based experience. *Castlevania: Lament of Innocence* will creep out of the shadows in early 2004, and we'll be there, stake in hand.

FIRST OPINIONS

Castlevania, the series that started it all, is up against some tough competition these days. It's got to prove itself against the immortal *Devil May Cry* if it's going to impress us. We'll bring you a full review soon and tell you whether it's the bat's knackers or the Count's mouldy old pants. We reckon the former, with any luck.

/ JOFF BROWN



SAY IT WITH FLOWERS And if they bite her head off, the night just got cheaper.



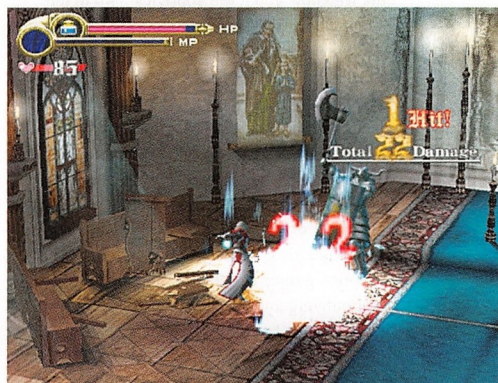
WHIP SERVICE Doling out combos will build your enemies into a death frenzy.



OH LORD! Lament has the scope of Jackson's masterpiece.



NOBLE QUEST Looking good whilst drac-baiting is obligatory.



WRATH OF GOD A good opportunity for you to 'kick off' in the House of the Lord.



ONE FROM THE TOP Numbers appear on-screen denoting damage. Obvious really.

BEST VAMPIRE HUNTERS

LEON ISN'T ALONE – WE TAKE A LOOK AT HISTORY'S BEST VAMPIRE HUNTERS. ALRIGHT, FICTION'S...



> BUFFY

She kicked ass, yet at the same time, she had a nice one. Which is what we want from our heroines. And she'll be with us forever in the form of extortionate boxed sets.



> VELMA

The only one of that animated bunch of fools who actually did any work. *PSW* has been known to just after her movie version when inebriated. Love's no crime!



> D

Made of cartoons but still incredibly cool, Vampire Hunter D is the saturnine creation of Japan's anime underworld. We must get round to watching it one of these days.



> VAN HELSING

Cool enough to have been played by Anthony 'Hannibal Lecter' Hopkins and next year by Hugh 'Wolverine' Jackman. We love the drac-hating Dutchman.



CASTLEVANIA FACT!

> MAX UP!

The series has always flirted with rpg elements, and Lament is no exception. Enemies will lose points as you fight.

> HAPPY DEATHDAY

The Castlevania series is now 17 years old – but in fast-moving videogame years, that makes it about 300.

> VAMPIRE LORD

Koji Igarashi, the creator the series, is behind *Lament*. Which translates as: "clever man, he make good game."

> I LOVE 1986

If you asked a bunch of idiot D-list celebrities, they'd all claim they loved 'that little whippy man...'



> GUTTER GOAL

It's time to take the ball out of the court – pitch – field – whatever, and onto the street. Oh yes.

“IT’S A TOUGH CHOICE
BETWEEN THE TIGHT END
AND THE WIDE RECEIVER”

NFL STREET

EA SPORTS BIG MAKES YET ANOTHER IMPENETRABLE AMERICAN SPORT ACCESSIBLE FOR THE UNWASHED MASSES OF EUROPE. GOD BLESS 'EM.

> GENRE	SPORTS
> DEVELOPER	EA
> PUBLISHER	EA
> ETA	EARLY 2004
> ONLINE	YES

WE DIDN'T THINK IT COULD HAPPEN, BUT EA

Sports achieved the impossible: it made basketball fun. It chucked out the rulebook, bigged up the egos and the afros and took the game back to where it belongs: the “street”. The result was a master class in turning the tedious into the sublime. *NBA Street* they called it, and gamers liked it so much, them folks there at EA dog gone went and released a sequel.

Now, according to EA's staggeringly robust rules of accumulating returns, what's good for one sport is usually good for another, so it comes as no surprise that yet another American sport – this time it's the heavily-padded rugby variant football – is getting the same treatment. But who would have believed that the end result could have turned out so well?

Don't believe us? We'll admit that even we were a bit shocked by just how pick-up-and-play *NFL Street* was, but trust us when we say that this is shaping up to be every bit as slick and playable as it's bigger, b-balling brother.

STREET BROTHERS

Like *NBA Street*, *NFL* keeps the bare bones of the sport on which it's based – it's still two teams taking turns playing offence and defence, with the aim still being to push the ball ten yards over four “downs” and ultimately to the end zone – but pretty much everything else has changed. Teams are now seven a-side, to encourage a faster, less confusing game. Punting and field goals have been dropped, along with the “unnecessary roughing” rule, to promote lots of running and “anything goes” tackles.

The controls have been kept deliberately simple with only one button of any real importance, that being the “showboating” button, allowing you to prance about, juggle the ball between your legs and generally make a spectacle of yourself. The more showboating you do, the more points you'll earn towards unlocking the EA Sports Big Gamebreaker mode that allows you to tear through the opposition.

As with *NBA*, *NFL Street* features a huge roster of real-life players to pick from, along with the odd sprinkling of legendary players, with each character sporting a stylised likeness of the star they represent. Although, bearing in mind how little we know about the sport, it's hard to tell exactly how good the likenesses are. There's also a range of seven different fields to play on, each featuring a unique surface (sand, concrete, etc) that affects play accordingly. And, of course, there's that EA staple, the licensed soundtrack.

So the game's looking quite good then. All we need now is for the promised four-player online feature to stay for the Aussie release – let's not have another US-only Online mode please – and we'll be laughing. Pulse pounding, head crunching sports games like this demand to be played competitively and we don't want to miss the opportunity to beat the Yanks at their own game.

FIRST OPINIONS

This is slick stuff and just as accessible as its basketball-playing cousin *NBA Street*. It's also slightly deeper thanks to the more tactical nature of the sport. Whether it can win over the Aussie market in the same way *NBA* did, though, remains to be seen.

/ MARK ROBINS



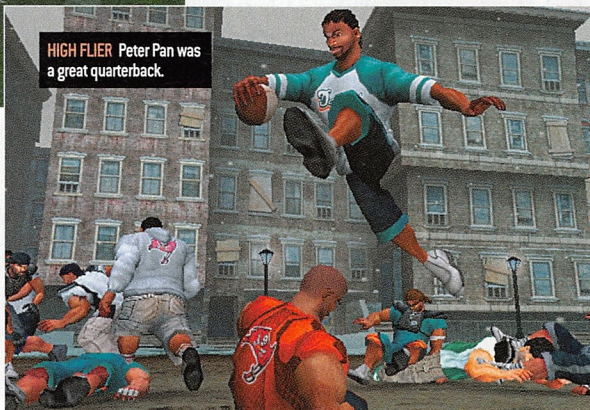
OOFCULTURE More ruff and tuff than NFL Normal.



JUMPING JACK SMASH Or is he feeling his nutsack?



HES A PUSHOVER What's next, eye gouging and crotch kicking?



HIGH FLIER Peter Pan was a great quarterback.



PASS IT ON "Every time I get this ball, I get beaten to a pulp!"



BALL BRAWL Forget those stupid rules – hit 'em all!



WHO'S THE DADDY? Both. Just like My Two Dads.

STREET THIS

OTHER SPORTS RIPE FOR THE EA STREET MAKEOVER.



STREET FOOTBALL

Or preferably, "park" football, this one is ripe with opportunities. Jumpers for goalposts, three-and-in, world cup doubles, rush goalies, dodging dog poo, falling over and grazing your knee, there, there, Mummy kiss it better... Only problem being that every "Street Soccer" game ever made has always been crap. Always.



STREET WRESTLING

OK, so you could technically say this has been done already in *Def Jam Vendetta*, but we're thinking more of your "Rough 'n' Tumble" sort of wrestling game full of pinching, scratching, ear-pulling and forcing fresh grass clippings into your opponents mouth. A game where the main aim is to make your opponent run home crying.



STREET BASEBALL

Typically though, it'll be another impenetrable American sport and our money's on *MLB Street* being about, ooh, six months from being officially announced. Possibly. Why can't they make a decent rounders game instead? Where you have to pick teams and the fat wheezy kid is always the last to be chosen?



NFL STREET FACT!

> **IT'S NOT PROPER FOOTBALL**
It's American football, but with seven players on each side. And no rules. And it's fun. No, seriously!

> **YOUR STATS, GIVE THEM TO ME**
A massive roster of all 32 NFL teams and over 300 individual players including all-time star players.

> **SHOW ME THE MONEY**
Showboat to your heart's content and pull off massive, over-the-top game breaking moves and combos.

> **WORLD CUP AMERICAN FOOTBALL**
Features a full Multiplayer mode for up to four players and online support for the mother of all play-offs.



> SNOW-CUT DENIM

It's important to look foxy on the slopes, even if it means getting frostbite. Put a jumper on luv!

"FIREWORKS EJACULATE CHROMATIC GUNPOWDER OVER EVERYTHING"

SSX 3

SEXIER THAN SSX, TRICKIER THAN TRICKY, THE PREMIERE SNOWBOARD SIM IS BACK WITH AN AVALANCHE OF NEW FEATURES.

> GENRE	SNOWBOARDING
> DEVELOPER	ELECTRONIC ARTS
> PUBLISHER	ELECTRONIC ARTS
> ETA	OCTOBER
> ONLINE	YES

AS SUPERCHARGED SEQUELS GO, THEY DON'T

come much more pumped with expectation than SSX3. A lot's changed up the mountain for the flagship snowboarding title's third outing – much more so than the 'remix' transition from SSX to its semi-sequel, *SSX Tricky*. Now, all the boarding happens on one giant mountain which can, at least in theory, be raced all the way down for tens of minutes at a time. There was a lot of head-based landing going on during our first tentative play moments, but soon enough we were back to our nefarious ways: punching, tricking, short-cutting and sailing through opponents in mid-air, causing them to crash, and then coolly denying it a total of three seconds later. Yep, it's the same sensational mix of speed, stunts and stupid cool that we enjoyed so much before, but this time round it's been given much more than just a new lick of paint.

We're told by the developer that they're aiming for "rich, natural graphics". This is the biggest joke since Saddam Hussein wore that T-shirt with an iron-on target symbol, because the graphics are, thankfully, anything but natural. Instead, they're just what you'd expect from the people who created the ludicrous concept of the super-über trick – they're utterly mad. Coloured lights wash the snow in a mad spectrum of phosphorescence, fireworks ejaculate chromatic gunpowder over everything and levels extend for miles into the distance (see this month's DVD!).

NO SLOPING OFF, NOW

Mind you, they're also saying that you can now extend combos 'forever!' which just has to be wrong – how could they test it, for a start? But we're pretty sure you can Carry On Up The Combo for a long, long time, at least until you're incredibly bored or hungry. Or the PS2 burns out. Or, more likely, you crash into a superbly rendered snowdrift. Of course, all the hooray-Henry new features in the world won't do much good if the game's about as much fun as an episode of *The Bill*. So we're glad to report that the original smooth-boarding action of SSX seems largely unchanged at this point. Boards plough through pack-ice and powder just as they did before, and the characters are as resolutely 'extreme' as ever. Our current favourite is old hand, Kaori, who eschews the normal extreme catch phrases in favour of simply babbling away in Japanese. It's oddly endearing. What's here is still exhilarating: snowboarding à la SSX is basically synchronised falling, with brief moments spent on the snow interspersed with yawning, gut-wrenching drops into the unknown.

A lot has changed on the PS2 extreme sports landscape since SSX first blew us away, and the new sequel has a fair amount of catching up to do. We've seen glimpses of greatness here, but we'll be withholding judgement until we see the finished version. No, we really will. Honest...

FIRST OPINIONS

There's still a lot of work to do before it's polished shinier than a tin man's brass buttons, but we know that's what's going to happen because, well, this is Electronic Arts we're talking about. And they don't release anything these days unless it's got an inch-thick coating of French polish all over it. So we're still confident of SSX3's powers to thrill. And so should you be.

/ JOFF BROWN



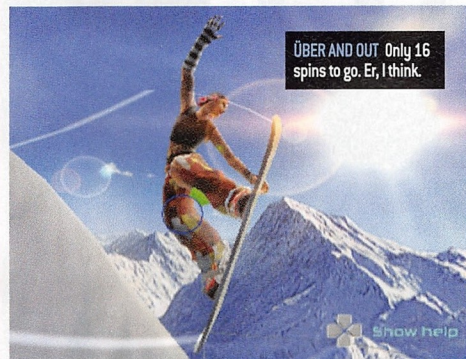
AIR TO THE THRONE
One for the ladies.



BEAUTY AND THE PISTE
We like girls. And snow.



SNOW WHAT Bet he
posed for that shot.



ÜBER AND OUT Only 16
spins to go. Er, I think.



BOARD GAMES Playing
the slope for a fool.



SO FLY Athletic and
demure. BA-DA-BING!

THE WHO'S WHO OF SSX 3

WHO'S OLD? WHO'S NEW? WHO LOOKS LIKE A SWEDISH PORN STAR? WHO DOESN'T? AND WHO REALLY CARES? PSW REVEALS EVERYTHING...



> ALLEGRA

WHO? Ignore the little-girl pigtales – Allegra is a real contender. We would.
REMINDS US A BIT OF: A pretty au pair with a big bit of bendy wood strapped to her feet.



> MOBY

WHO? Annoying mockney git who's been around since the first SSX.
REMINDS US A BIT OF: An overdone, 30-ish Shoreditch twat still trying to look cool.



> ELISE

WHO? SSX's original tart with no heart is back again. Apparently, she also snowboards!
REMINDS US A BIT OF: A Swedish porn model. But so does every girl, kinda...



> NATE

WHO? A man who takes his boarding very seriously. Never smiles, not even at kittens.
REMINDS US A BIT OF: Jean Reno, if he'd been a boarder instead of an assassin.



> GRIFF

WHO? Scandalously young whippersnapper staying up late with the grown-ups.
REMINDS US A BIT OF: Macauley Culkin, just before he got fat, old and dead-eyed.



> PSYMON

WHO? Mad as a duck. So mad, he can't spell his own name. That's pretty mad.
REMINDS US A BIT OF: The image Fred Durst has of himself inside his head.



> KAORI

WHO? Japanese import with a sunnier disposition than an Evok on Ecstasy.
REMINDS US A BIT OF: Lucy Lui, if she chilled out and smiled once in a while, that is.



> VIGGO

WHO? Newcomer from the fjords who seems pretty easy-going. At least right now.
REMINDS US A BIT OF: A kind of satanic mixture of all four members of Abba.



> MAC

WHO? Still not shedding that Parka, Mac is back to reclaim his Mountain King title.
REMINDS US A BIT OF: What a clean-living Liam Gallagher might have looked like.



> ZOE

WHO? An SSX stalwart blossoming into a fully-fledged boarder babe.
REMINDS US A BIT OF: The bird from Republica who went and got a stupid mullet.

SSX3 FACT!

> SHUT YOUR MOUTH!

There are no celebrity voiceovers to pique your interest or bore you silly, depending on how you felt about *Tricky*.

> ÜBER THE RAINBOW

Super-über tricks can only be performed after you've maxed out your power bar with über tricks.

> OH BOARDER, WHERE ART THOU?

Luther and Eddie have disappeared from the opening line-up. Good. They were as irritating as anal boils.

> CITY TRICKERS

Just because it's all on one mountain, doesn't mean there aren't some kick-ass urban tracks, too.



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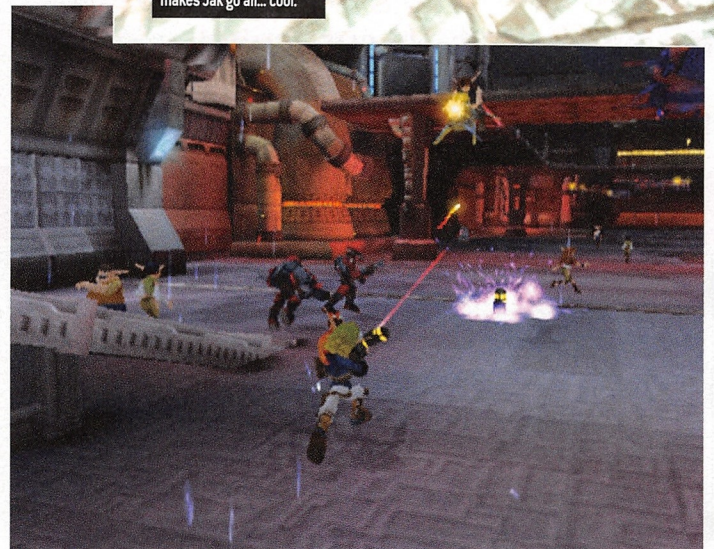
NIGHT VISION The city empties in the nighttime.



THE DARKNESS Dark Eco makes Jak go all... cool.



JAK YOUR BODY Back and more grown-up than ever.



> TYPE	PLATFORM
> PLAYERS	1
> OUT	NOW
> PUBLISHER	SONY
> PRICE	\$99.95
> DEVELOPER	NAUGHTY DOG
> ONLINE	NO

JAK II: RENEGADE

HIS NAME MAY NOT BE INCLUDED IN THE TITLE ANYMORE, BUT MAKE NO MISTAKE: THIS IS STILL DAXTER'S SHOW.

ABBOTT & COSTELLO, LAUREL & HARDY, Roy & HG, Steve & Mark Waugh – all great double acts, but sadly none of them suited to a world of jumping on top of barrels of toxic waste and taking on hordes of ferocious aliens via the medium of madly rotating, fist-waving pirouettes (although we'd like to see the Waugh Brothers give it a go).

Jak & Daxter, on the other hand, are a furry twosome equally at home bouncing on the

heads of half-metal, half-rabid dog creatures as they are dishing out the one-liners. Think hard and you might even remember them from their mildly popular PlayStation2 adventure, *Jak & Daxter: The Precursor Legacy*. Big, pretty and full of chuckle-inducing lines? Remember it now? We do. Because it was great. But then along came another pair of platform-jumping, wise-cracking buddies by the name of *Ratchet & Clank* and our eyes began to wander. *Jak & Daxter*

might have been the big chested, flowery skirt-wearing blonde of PS2 platformers, but *Ratchet & Clank* was the gritty brunette with fire in her eyes and a belt for a skirt – we wanted her.

Never ones to rest on their laurels however, Jak & Daxter have been busy "sexing" themselves up over the past year or so in a bid to win back our hearts, and the result is a game that, while very similar in feel to the original, boasts a much darker, seedier atmosphere this time around. Which is good. Because we tend to like it seedy around here.

DAXTER, DAXTER

Things in *Jak II*, much like a typical Friday night trip to the boozier, start innocently enough. With the world once again put to rights at the end of the first game, Jak & Daxter find themselves free to while away their days, reminiscing about the monsters they vanquished and fiddling about with all the ancient bits of Precursor technology they managed to pick up along the way. It is a tranquil lifestyle indeed, but is it one that will last? Does it heck – it wouldn't be much



PRAXIS OF EVIL Good pun that. Shame it doesn't mean anything.



POLICE AND THIEVES Don't nick stuff when the cops are about.





of a game if it did – and Daxter, being the mischievous weaselly type thing he is, manages to accidentally activate a time portal into the future. One charming little intro sequence later and both our heroes are whisked away to the bleak fortress city of Haven.

Now Haven City is a pretty rough place – constant drizzle, thick smog, a brutal police force – and things don't come much worse there than it's despotic leader Baron Praxis. He's a nasty peace of work alright and poor old Jak soon discovers just how nasty when he's kidnapped, banged up in jail and force fed the mysterious element Dark Eco for two years until he freaks out in an epileptic fit of *Incredible Hulk* style rage.

Why? Well that's a secret that unfolds across *Jak II*'s epic storyline, and we're talking all *The Lord of the Rings* movies back-to-back epic here. What starts as a simple tale of revenge (Jak's angry and he wants Praxis dead – see, we told you it was darker than the previous one) blossoms into an absolute belter of a story, full of plot-twists, stunning set-peaces and just the slightest tinge of romance. What'll get you most though is the humour, and we're not kidding when we say that *Jak II* is one of the funniest games we've ever played.

Yeah, we know we're banging on about the storyline a lot here, but *Jak II* manages to squeeze one in as deep and compelling as anything seen in a *Final Fantasy* game and without ever needing to resort to an overblown

“DAXTER WOMANISES, DRINKS AND USES EXPLETIVES. BY VIRTUE OF HIS BEHAVIOUR HE'S A TRUE PSWICON.”

cut-scene. OK, so there are cut-scenes, plenty of them if we're being honest, but they're short, to the point and, thanks to the wildly comic antics of Daxter, you'll piss yourself laughing at them. Cute and Disney-esque he may be, but there's an edge about Daxter that makes it OK for “grown ups” to laugh at him. He womanises, he drinks, he uses mild expletives – he is, by virtue of his behaviour, a true PSWicon.

JAK'S ENTERTAINMENT

As much as Daxter might try to steal the show though – and let's make no mistake about this, it's Jak you control, but Daxter who makes the pairing what it is – it's Haven City itself that really makes the jaw drop and the sphincter loosen. The original *Jak & Daxter* might have done a good job of presenting an actual 'world' to explore and bounce through, but *Jak II* blows that concept out of the water. Haven City is a living, breathing, sprawling metropolis and one that will forever redefine the PS2's definition of the word “awesome”. Forget the tomb-like streets of *Vice City* (although the similarity between the two games is obvious), New Haven packs hundreds, if not thousands of pedestrians

DAXTER'S ACTING MASTERCLASS

THE PSWTEAM LEARN FROM THE MOST EXPRESSIVE CHARACTER IN VIDEO GAMES



JON DOES FIERCE Look at those eyes, that snarl, that terrifying squint. We respect the short hairy one. No, the other short hairy one.



RICHARD DOES SEDUCTIVE Oh dear. Rich lets the side down for managing to look more like a rodent than Daxter. About as sexy as fishpaste.



JOFF DOES WACKY Joff makes a valiant effort, bless him, but there's a touch of “trying too hard” about his performance. Daxter's is real.



LEE DOES SURPRISED While Daxter looks like he's just found a 5p piece, Lee appears to have spotted an elephant molesting his gran.



MARK DOES PISSED In the interests of realism, Robins downed a whole vase of absinthe, three dry sherries and a jigger of rum for this shot.

HAVEN HOLIDAYS

THE TOP FIVE MOST POPULAR TOURIST DESTINATIONS IN THE WONDERFUL HAVEN CITY.



GARDENS: Tired of the hustle and bustle of the daily grind? Then visit Haven City's gardens with its fruit trees and giant vegetable patch.



MARKET: Enjoy the fresh food section, pamper yourself at the fragrance stall and buy pirate DVDs from the shifty-looking man in the



SLUMS: Ever wondered what that smell is? Why it's the quaint odour of open sewers, filled with floating excrement and rotting corpses.



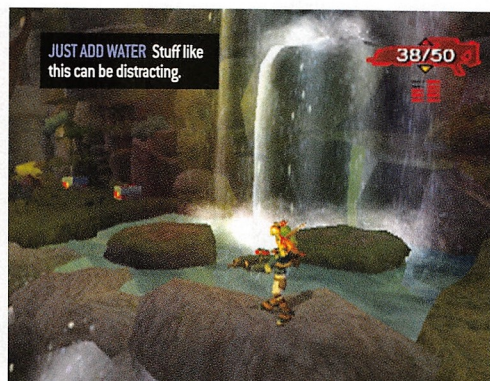
STADIUM: Come here to enjoy the flying car races competitions, or simply to be ripped off by street stalls hawking under-cooked pies.



THE LAKE: Thanks to run-off from the slums, you can't see the bottom of it, but Haven City's lake is the place to come for swanky nightlife.



BREAK POINT It's not all jumping around and chatting.



JUST ADD WATER Stuff like this can be distracting.



A DIM VIEW The only problems concern the game camera.

and flying vehicles into its teeming, busy metropolitan districts.

As the game progresses Jak & Daxter travel back and forth across this vibrant, bustling city, sometimes on foot, sometimes by hijacking passing flying cars (again, we're getting the *Vice City* vibe here), and all while doing their best to avoid the attention of the police, although that said, running over hapless troopers in a high speed anit-grav motorbike can be considered one of *Jak II*'s many guilty little pleasures. While this can be purely from an exploratory approach – hidden throughout the city you'll find challenge booths that require you to fly around the streets, collecting specific items within a time limit among other trials – the vast majority of time you'll be out performing jobs for the various inhabitants of the city. And that's where

"THE LEVELS ARE IMMENSE IN A 'LISA RILEY AFTER A DAY'S GORGING AT THE ALL-YOU-CAN-EAT PASTY FACTORY' KIND OF WAY."

things start getting clever, because the more tasks you complete, the more your reputation begins to precede you and the more jobs you'll be offered at once, meaning it won't be long before you're able to pick and choose the objectives at hand.

SMOKING GUN

But while these tasks often involve a traditional bout of jumping around platforms, say in an abandoned sewer plant or mine, *Jak II* is much more than just your common or garden platform game. It's a driving game, a skateboarding game (there's a *Back to the Future*-style hoverboard that lets Jak rip it up like the Hawkster, complete with rail grinds and wicked stylee aerial stunts), but most of all, it's a shoot 'em up as well. Maybe it's in response to *Ratchet & Clank*'s significantly more gun-toting gameplay, but Jak is armed to the teeth this time around and he's not afraid to pop a cap in the ass of the next person who dares even look at him funny.

There are four weapons all told, each with their own inimitable style, and they'll all need a thorough work out before the end credits roll. Fans of Jak's spinning and punching moves



TARGET RENEGADE Shoot the big green thing with the red stuff.



needn't worry too much as they're all still in here, but guns are Jak's favourite new thing, resulting in a game that's very much about getting busy with your trigger finger, such as when Jak hooks up with a computer-controlled partner for a bit of team-based, bad guy blasting.

JUMP AROUND! JUMP! JUMP!

Still, let's not lose sight of the fact that *Jak II* is a platform game at heart and that means a good deal of time spent jumping across boulders and barrels in an attempt to work your way through the staggeringly huge levels. And when we say huge, we mean Ian Hewitson after a day's gorging at the all-you-can-eat pasty factory. Thankfully there's a map screen to help you navigate, but even with this, and the obligatory first-person view mode, it can still be a confusing task working out which way to go to next.

Not that there's any case to panic, as there's never a rush to complete your objectives. Most of the time you can simply sit back, put your feet up and marvel at the astonishingly pretty scenery. You'll almost wonder if somebody's stolen away your PS2 and replaced it with a million dollar super computer, such is the graphical majesty on display at times.

As good looking as *Jak II* may be though, its constant insistence that you admire its shapely form leads to a number of problems. Jak's animation, for instance, is great to look at, but overly fussy at times and that's no help when

you're trying to pull off very precise jumping moves. Then there's... wait for it... the camera. Now we're not saying that *Jak II* has a bad camera, because it doesn't, but it's damn uncooperative on occasion. Using the right analogue stick to spin the camera round Jak is all very well, but because the camera stays at a fixed distance at all times it often refuses to move whenever Jak is standing near a wall. Fine out in the open, but majorly frustrating if you happen to be standing in a narrow corridor.

And then there's the sections where *Jak II* takes over control of the camera altogether, leaving you with a forced perspective of the action. We understand it does this to help heighten tension at points, but we can't help but feel it harkens back a bit too much to the frustrating days of *Crash Bandicoot* (itself designed by *Jak*'s developer Naughty Dog) and that's something we can do without.

Any other problems then? No, not really. *Jak II: Renegade* is one of the biggest, prettiest, slickest platformers we've ever come across and it's got one of the funniest scripts in video game history. One minute you're manning a giant gun-turret, the next you're being chased by a robot tank and the next you're watching a foot tall weasel making moves on the female version of Arnold Schwarzenegger.

Well, there is one thing. If we had to put our finger on *Jak II*'s biggest fault it would be that often feels just too big, especially Haven City

itself. The action levels themselves are great, but too often you're spending five minutes or so picking your way across the city just to get to them. Then it's five minutes back to the person you're performing the task for and so on. We love having a city so big to play in, but the travel's absolute hell.

It may sound like we're being picky, but it's more than that: *Jak II*'s sheer size slows the game down needlessly. Had the levels been strung together one after the other, this could have been the platformer to end all platformers, but then it would have lost a lot of the charm that simply comes from being part of an "almost" real world. Not that *Jak II* lacks in charm. A certain little weasel sees to that.

/ MARK ROBINS

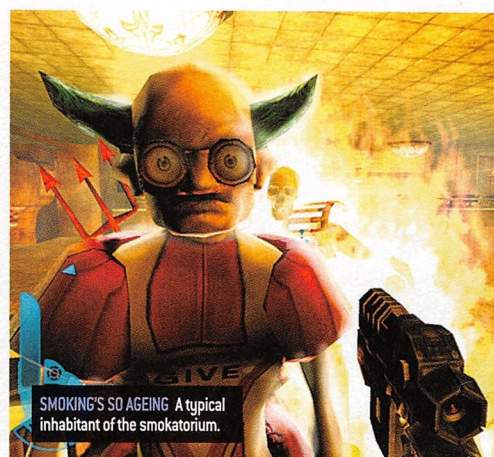
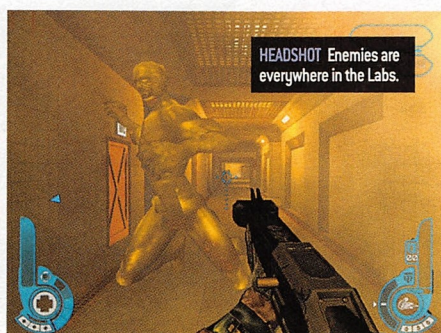
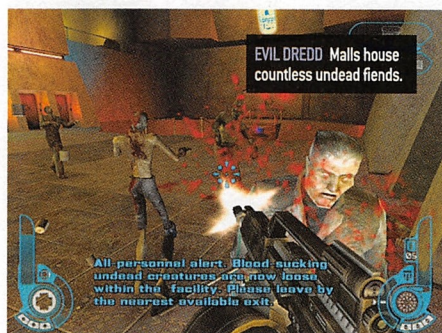
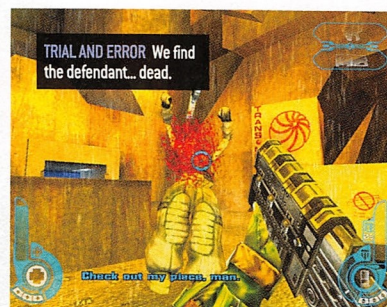
PSW VERDICT		
<div> <div>UPPERS</div> <div> <div>> Looks simply beautiful</div> <div>> Brilliant, witty script</div> <div>> Huge, inventive levels</div> <div>> Superb voiceovers</div> </div> </div> <div> <div>DOWNERS</div> <div> <div>> Unco-operative camera</div> <div>> Lots of trekking about</div> <div>> Overly fussy animations</div> <div>> Not enough Daxter</div> </div> </div>		
GRAPHICS	> It's amazing what they can do these days	10
SOUNDS	> Sparse music, but first-class voiceover work	8
GAMEPLAY	> Genius level, but why all the wandering?	8
OVERALL SCORE A sumptuous example of platforming genius, only let down by the time-consuming wandering around you're forced to undertake across it's massive, yet admittedly stunning world.		
		8

REVIEW

JUDGE DREDD: DREDD VERSUS DEATH



IN THE DOCKS The Dock area is one of 11 levels.



JUDGE DREDD: DREDD VERSUS DEATH

HE IS THE LAW. BUT IS HIS GAME ANY GOOD? FIND OUT BELOW, CREEPS...

> TYPE	SHOOTER
> PLAYERS	1-4
> OUT	SEPTEMBER
> PUBLISHER	VIVENDI
> PRICE	\$99.95
> DEVELOPER	OCTOBER
> ONLINE	NO

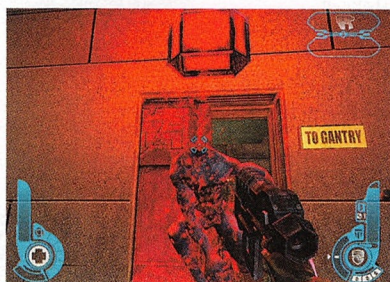
NOSTALGIA CAN DO STRANGE THINGS TO THE mind. Even now, we can still remember the thrill of going to the newsagent and handing over our hard-earned pocket money in exchange for the latest issue of our favourite magazine. We'd run home with it held in a vice-like grip, lock our bedroom door and spend many a happy hour perusing the new pages. We were literally glued to the thing. Sadly though, it seems unlikely that there'll ever be a game based on the grot-tastic *People* licence, forever denying us the chance to play a first-person shooter starring Sarah, 22, from Croyden Park. Developers have been savvy enough to snap up the licence for our second

favourite teenage read however, *2000AD's* sci-fi law enforcer with the chiselled chin, Judge Dredd.

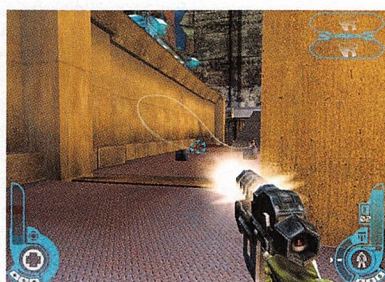
If rival Dan Dare was the comic book equivalent of Cliff Richard (an inoffensive hunk of bland you'd be happy to take home to meet the parents), Dredd would be Sid Vicious, all zips and leather. Back in 1977, there was nothing more punk than a central character who was an elite storm trooper for a fascist police state, and his satirical adventures spawned generations of fans. Unfortunately, most of the credibility he built up over the years was destroyed by the dreadful (sorry) movie starring the Sylvester Stallone and so *Dredd* began to fade from the

public consciousness, like Volvo 240GLs, Dagwood Dogs and white dog shit.

And that would have been the end of that, had not plucky software house Rebellion decided to warm up the futuristic heart paddles and pump several thousand volts into his faintly beating ticker by buying *2000AD* in an attempt to rescue its dwindling sales. Not only did Rebellion save the mag, it subsequently managed to surprise approximately no people in the entire world by announcing plans to develop a first-person shooter based on the *Dredd* property. Fast forward to 2003 AD and the game's finished. Time for us to put on the PSW judging helmet and pronounce sentence, then.



RED OR DREDD? Shoot first, ask questions later.



HOT HOT HEAT The Heatseeker is an impressive weapon.

THIS IS THE LORE

In the twenty second century, the sprawling metropolis of Mega City One is ruled over by the Judges, who roam the streets dishing out instant and usually painful justice to its less law-abiding citizens. Of the Judges, Dredd (or Joe to his friends) is the most feared and respected. But heroes are only as cool as their villains, and Dredd has a corker in the decaying shape of Judge Death, a supernatural fiend who judges all humans guilty of life and sentences gory death



as punishment. If you need to know why Death is cool, put it this way; he looks like a rotting skeleton, sounds like a snake, and has a pterodactyl for a shoulder pad. At the start of the game, Death escapes his containment along with his fellow Dark Judges, namely Fire, Mortis and Fear. Obviously it's Dredd's job to bring 'em back in, undead or alive.

The Story mode of the game takes place over 11 different levels, ranging from the city streets through to prisons, zombie-infested shopping malls and a museum. There's also a level set in a smokatorium, a den of inequity where citizens can go to illegally smoke cigarettes, sort of like a futuristic bike shed. Anyone worried by this kind of rampant originality will be relieved to discover that there are some sections set in a sewer. It's unclear what would happen if a game was developed without a sewer section, but the scientists we spoke to suggested that the world would fall off its axis and we'd all have to live upside down. Still, as sewer sections go, these are quite nicely done, as are all the locations. The world looks pleasingly futuristic, and if you're a fan of giant metal bulkhead doors, flying cars and even pot noodles, you'll find plenty to admire. Rebellion has crafted a rich world ripped

"MUCH OF YOUR TIME WILL BE SPENT BLOWING HUGE CHUNKS OUT OF CRIMINALS' CRANIUMS WITH DREDD'S GUN-KNIFE."

straight from the pages of the comic, and fans will be amazed at the level of detail and in-jokes here. The smart cut-scenes are produced by the game engine and use tricky graphical lighting to great effect.

BUT IS THE GAME MUCH COP?

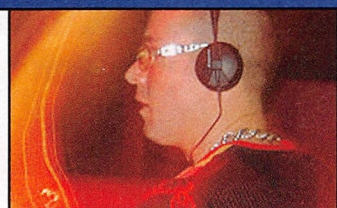
If you've played either *Red Faction 2* or *TimeSplitters 2*, you'll know pretty much what to

expect here. Much of your time will be spent blowing huge bloody chunks out of criminals' craniums with Dredd's weapon of choice, the Lawgiver. While it looks like a wussy pistol, it's actually a veritable Swiss Army gun-knife, with six different ammo types. These range from the standard rapid fire to the more exotic ricochet, incendiary and heat seeking varieties.

More than just a gimmick, there can be great tactical advantage to choosing the right ammo for the right situation. Perp hiding round the corner? No problem if you bounce some bullets off a nearby wall into his cowardly spine. There's also a lot of fun to be had aiming the Hi-explosive type at people's feet and blasting

JUDGING THE JUDGES

DREDD JUDGES CELEBRITIES AND FICTIONAL CHARACTERS... WITH THE WORD JUDGE IN THEIR NAME!



1/ JUDGE JULES

DREDD: "Not responsible for much law upholding as far as I can see. Spends most of his time playing multiple audio recordings, and disturbing the peace."

VERDICT: Ten years in the Iso-cubes for crimes against da beat.



2/ JUDGE REINHOLD

DREDD: "He played a bumbling policeman in *Beverly Hills Cop*, where he let a perp put a banana up his tail pipe. Sloppy work there."

VERDICT: 15 years without the chance to help Axle "one last time".



3/ JUDGE JOE BROWN

DREDD: "Nice to see someone who's tough, uncompromising, and not afraid to bend the rules. Not sure about the show, but at least he does some Judging."

VERDICT: Probation, but we'll have our eye on you, creep.



4/ JUDGE JUDY

DREDD: "Another proper judge, and a bit of a looker at that. She's so heartless, do you have her number? Can you get it? One hot mamma and no mistake."

VERDICT: Guilty, of stealing my heart. Sigh.



REALISTIC Characters are ripped straight from the comic's pages.



JUDGMENT DAY It's not all indiscriminate killing, you know... Alright then, it is.



JUDGE RULES Balance the law meter for success.

them into the air. Just make sure you don't blow yourself up in the process. You can pick up other weapons too throughout the game (though you can only carry two guns at a time), from shotguns to heavy machine guns, which are perfect when you absolutely, positively have to kill every mofo in the room.

YOU ARE THE LAW

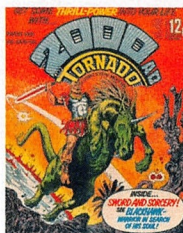
It's not all indiscriminate killing though, as Dredd is meant to uphold the law after all. One of the game's unique features is the law meter. When you approach a suspect, you can push the challenge button and order their surrender. If they comply, you can arrest them and your law meter goes up. Keep it consistently high throughout the level and you'll unlock bonus features like extra multiplayer skills and cheats. Let it fall too low (by killing lots of innocent bystanders or attacking your fellow judges) and you'll fail the mission. Of course most perps won't go quietly, but you can get most to surrender by taking out their leader, disarming them, or kneecapping them. We prefer the latter option, and we dare say you will too. You can also challenge and arrest innocent bystanders for crimes such as smoking or loitering, which is a nice touch.

Balancing the law meter may be essential for success, but there's plenty of opportunity for guilt-free shooting in the shape of vampires and zombies, who you'll be seeing a lot of in the game. They run and jump at you constantly, meaning your trigger finger is rarely out of

action. Stealth isn't particularly needed when taking on the undead, but your rechargeable shields encourage you to run away and hide if the numbers become overwhelming. Xbox shooter *Halo* has obviously been a big influence on the development team for *Dredd*, as it also features rechargeable shields and the only two-weapons-at-a-time rule. While the two weapons feature worked well for the energy-based guns in the Xbox shooter, this concession to reality is slightly ludicrous here, considering Dredd must be carrying 100lbs of machine gun ammo in his tiny utility belt.

Once you've worked your way through the Story mode (either by yourself or in Co-operative mode with a friend), there's still the Arcade and Battle modes to play about with. Arcade mode is a series of mini episodes, which require you to perform certain tasks to a strict time limit. The first one sees you cast as Judge Anderson, dispatching zombies who'll only stay down with a perfect head shot from your shotgun. Later levels see you controlling riots, performing escort duty for dignitaries and even swapping sides to show those judges a thing or two. These sections are fun to work though and provide a

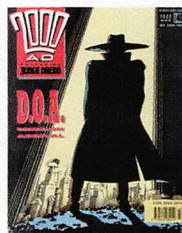
DAWN OF THE DREDD: A POTTED HISTORY.



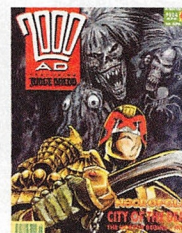
2102 > Judge Death arrives in Mega City 1.



2103 > Dark Judges appear for the first time.



2111 > Dredd takes a walk in the wilderness.

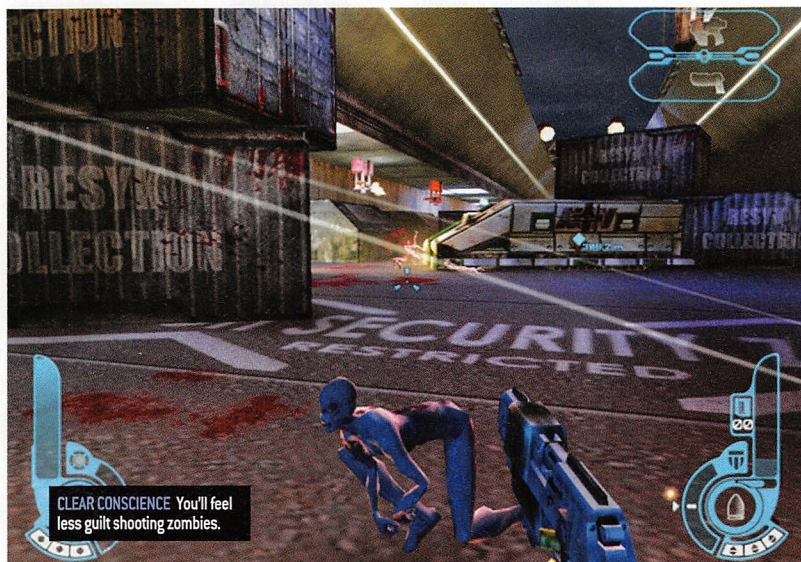


2112 > Death turns MC-1 into the necropolis.

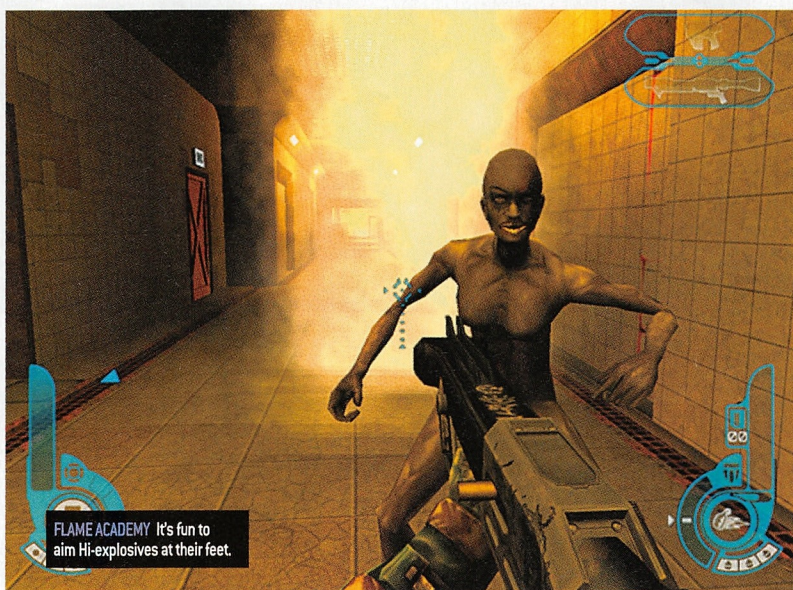


2114 > Judgement day. Mega Cities are nuked.

2102 2103 2104 2105 2106 2107 2108 2109 2110 2111 2112 2113 2114 2115 2116



"HANDCUFF DEFEATED FRIENDS AND SENTENCE THEM TO WATCH 12 HOURS OF *SUNRISE*."



welcome distraction from the content of the main game.

The Battle mode is where you can spend some time laying down the law to your friends with bloody deathmatches. With six Play modes and ten maps, the Multiplayer mode is fairly comprehensive. Although the detail level is reduced from the main game, it runs quite smoothly even with four players plus bots. You can get into the spirit of things by actually handcuffing defeated friends and sentencing them to watch 12 hours of *Sunrise*. You'll probably want to go back to the superior

multiplayer games of *Red Faction 2* and *TimeSplitters 2* eventually, but *Dredd's* multiplayer is a well-polished addition.

ACTUALLY, WE ARE THE LAW

It may have been all good news so far, but there are a few moths in the vegemite that prevent *Dredd Versus Death* from becoming a PSW classic. For a start, the Story mode is very linear and there's not a great amount of experimentation or exploration to be done. Most of the time you'll be clearing rooms of creeps and flicking switches, which gets old pretty fast. While there are a few set-pieces scattered throughout the game, few of them are particularly spectacular and so you're mainly relying on the enjoyment of relentless blasting to push you through the game. The game's also not quite as polished as it could be, with the odd bug cropping up occasionally.

Levels (while undeniably huge) suffer from repetitive layouts, and you can occasionally get lost, though compass arrows address this to some extent. A lack of variety is really the biggest problem here. A few mini-games might have really helped, possibly involving the huge Lawmaster bike that Dredd rides in many of the cut-scenes.

Despite these problems, this is easily the best rendition of the *2000AD* universe outside of the comics, and the game retains much of the satirical humour. Just walking round reading the many billboards can be very entertaining, as they really capture the spirit of *Dredd*. The Dawn

of the Dead-inspired shopping mall level also deserves a mention for both its combination of zombies and shotguns and the amusing tannoy messages that occasionally drown out the muzak. There are lots of references for aficionados to spot, and it's nice to see Rebellion giving the fans what they want in the shape of Judge Death, rather than basing a whole game around a lesser character like Mean Machine.

Dredd Versus Death is a solid enough title, which just lacks a little bit of inspiration in its gameplay. If you're a *Judge Dredd* fan who's after an unpretentious first-person shooter it's definitely worth a look. If you couldn't give a flying drock for the big-chinned hero, you should probably go elsewhere for your blasting kicks. But we're going to wait for someone to pick up that *People* licence.

/ JON HAMBLIN



2117 > Dredd takes control of Sector 301.



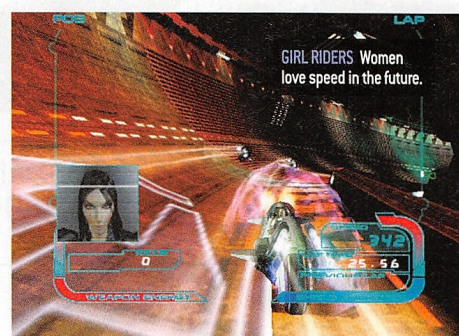
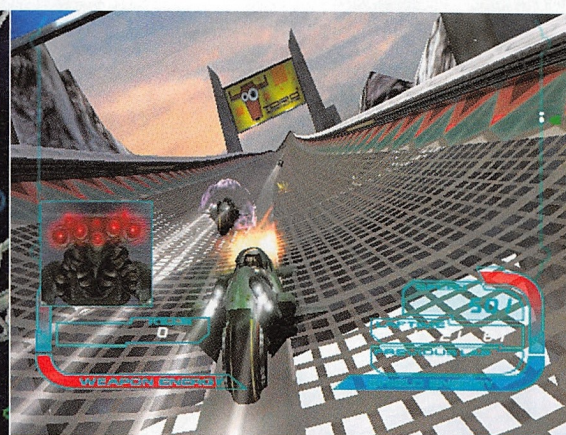
2118 > Riots sweep Sector 301.



2125 > Dredd continues to uphold the law.

2117 2118 2119 2120 2121 2122 2123 2124 2125

PSW VERDICT		
UPPERS	DOWNERS	
> Great design work	> Repetitive combat	
> Huge levels	> Easy to get lost	
> Comprehensive multiplayer	> Lacks polish	
> Stylish cut-scenes	> Very linear	
GRAPHICS	> Looks impressively Dreddy	8
SOUNDS	> Hilarious tannoy messages and lift muzak	7
GAMEPLAY	> Immense levels, but lacks variety	7
OVERALL SCORE		
Rebellion has certainly paid attention to detail. It's just a shame that <i>Dredd Versus Death</i> lacks variety. There are better action games out there, so only <i>Dredd</i> fans need apply.		
		7



XGRA

A FUTURISTIC RACER SO FAST IT OVERTAKES *WIPEOUT* LIKE IT'S STANDING STILL. BUT IS IT JUST ANOTHER CASE OF SPEED OVER SUBSTANCE?



> TYPE	RACING
> PLAYERS	1-2
> OUT	NOW
> PUBLISHER	ACCLAIM
> PRICE	\$99.95
> DEVELOPER	ACCLAIM
> ONLINE	NO

IF GAMES HAVE TAUGHT US ANYTHING, IT'S THAT in the future, there will be racing. Lots and lots of racing. But not the kind of racing that your dad watches on a Sunday afternoon, while he slumps semi-comatose on the sofa with one of those choice Tasmanian beers. This is sexy future racing where the pilots drive at impossible speeds, wear tight leather costumes, and probably have sex every night of their short adult lives. It's fast, it's furious, and it's extremely violent. Just the way we like it, then.

If you've never played a futuristic racing game, imagine, if you will, climbing into a washing machine filled with neon lights and trendy T-shirts while a mate flicks the spin setting to fast (if you are going to try this, make sure you're not wearing a wool jumper, as this setting will probably cause superficial damage to the material). And if you think this sounds nasty, wait 'til you combine it with a cheesy dance music soundtrack. Believe us, you'll be vomiting blood long before the rinse cycle finishes.

Because *XGRA* is set in the future (2080 to be precise), the people who invent sports have decided that there should be one where you drive really fast *Akira*-style bikes on roller coaster tracks. They twist, turn and loop the loop and sometimes, just sometimes, they have jumpy bits. Although they're more falley-offey bits if we're honest. There are also lots of shortcuts and alternative routes to discover, essential for

getting the edge over your opponents and annoying the hell out of your mates.

As is standard in these games, there are speed panels littered all over the floor. Hit one and your bike surges forward. Keep hitting them, and your bike will break the sound barrier and you'll get a pretty haze explosion that makes you feel like you've suddenly come rushing up on strong tramp acid. Luckily though, the effect doesn't last as long, and it fades as you either slow down or hit a wall.

GUNS. LOTS OF GUNS

The other main standbys of futuristic racers are weapons, and they certainly haven't skimped on the artillery here. It's not really explained why drivers would want to take part in a sport where most competitors end up in small bin liners, but the implication is that they're just incredibly hard. While you start out with a fairly wimpy selection of attacks, you earn more by winning races in the Championship mode. But before you can do that, you have to earn your spurs.



WELCOME TO MARS Tracks are varied in terrain and toughness.

VICIOUS CYCLE

YOUR BIKE IS LOADED WITH FEARSOME FIREPOWER, WHICH SHOULD MAKE OVERTAKING CARAVANS ON A SINGLE CARRIAGEWAY SLIGHTLY SIMPLER.



STANDARD WEAPONRY

Despite having three types of weapons to choose from (either Bomb, Energy or Cannons), your starting artillery is pretty ineffective. Hit green blobs to power-up the big guns.



VAMPIRE

Activate this and a pretty green line will drain the shield energy from any bikes in front of you, making them a prime target for your cannons. It's time to be ruthless.



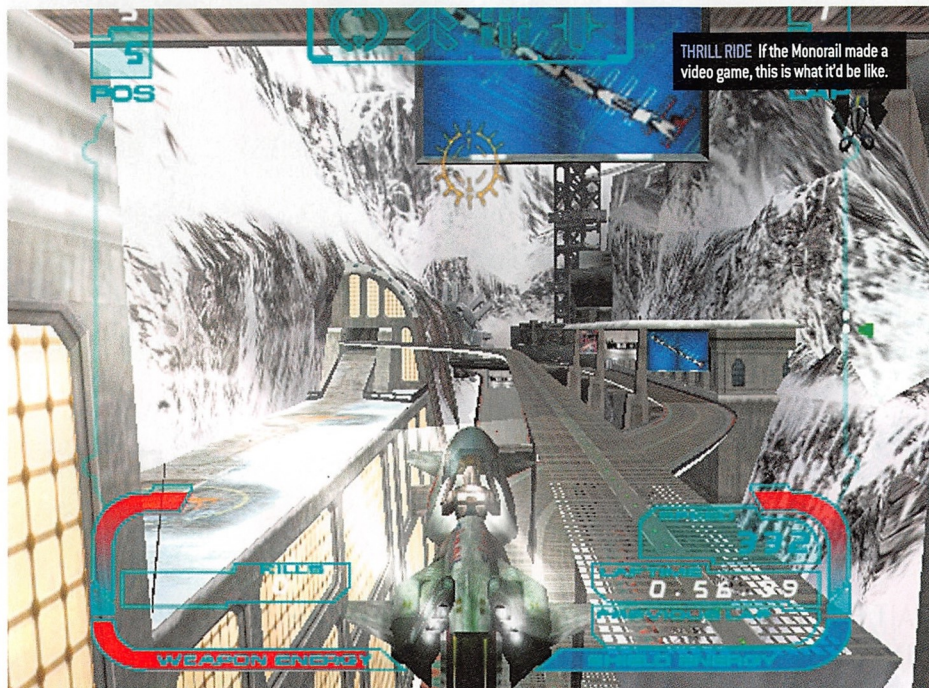
RAPIER

A Darth-Maul-style lightsaber appears on the front of your vehicle, which comes in pretty handy for shredding your opponents' tyres. That's if you can get close enough, of course.

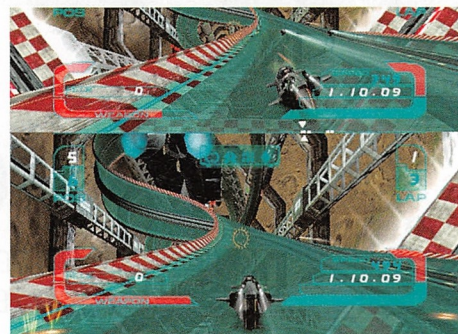
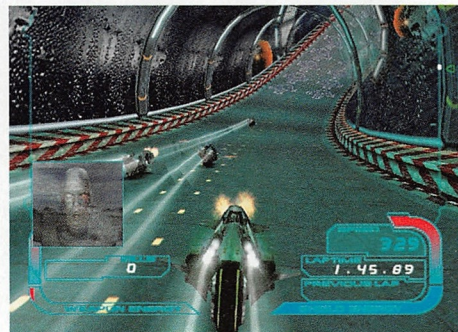


OVERLORD

Detonates a gigantic sunrise of an explosion that can take out several enemy vehicles all at once. Very powerful, with lots of pretty lights, too. Awww. We mean "Aaaaaaargh! Have that!"



THRILL RIDE If the Monorail made a video game, this is what it'd be like.



After you've picked a character, you need to win a race to get hired by a racing team. Once you've done that, you start in the bottom league of the XGRA. Each league has several tournaments, and each tournament has three races. Each tournament has a different set of racing rules. Some are purely about the racing, where others put the emphasis on kills. We preferred the racing levels as sometimes all the death and destruction can prove distracting.

WE ARE THE CHAMPIONS

The aim in Championship mode is to get enough points to move up to the next league, and you earn points by winning races and clocking up the kills. You also have to please your team by fulfilling contracts for each race. These range



FIRE! Imagine if Webber and Schumacher had had these.

"LIKE CLIMBING IN A WASHING MACHINE FILLED WITH NEON LIGHTS AND TRENDY T-SHIRTS WITH THE SPIN SETTING ON FAST."

from simple tasks like getting a fastest lap time to more complex ones like destroying rival team's advertising hoardings. Often you'll be asked to take out a specific opponent, which is a lot harder than it sounds. These contracts add a bit of variety and completing them gives you bike upgrades and unlockable galleries.

One of the most important aspects of racing is tuning up your bike before each contest. You can adjust three variables: downforce (which alters your traction at the expense of speed), ride height (which alters your suspension and steering), and Air Brakes (which alter the effectiveness of your brakes during skids). In practice, if you're entering a course with lots of twists you'll want a high downforce and a low ride height to make it more stable on the corners. On a course with lots of straights, you'll want the opposite. It makes a surprising difference to your speed and handling in practice, but in terms of depth, it's hardly *GT4*.

Unusually, there's actually been a bit of thought put into the sound design, too. When you enter outdoor sections on the planet surface tracks, all the sound effects fade out leaving just

the music and your thudding heartbeat. Which is a clever way of representing the vacuum of space y'see. Well, we were impressed.

XGRA is the fourth in the *Extreme G* series, and although it's certainly slicker than *XG3*, you can't help feeling that the genre has become a bit stale. It's not enough to simply make it faster and twistier with nicer lighting effects, we want some innovation in there, too. So if they're still peddling the same thing on the PlayStation3 in a few years time, we're going to have to have words. *XGRA* is one of the best futuristic racers on PS2 with its eye-bleedingly fast and explosive action, but ultimately it lacks that spark in design to ignite our nitros.

/ JON HAMBLIN

PSW VERDICT

> UPPERS		> DOWNERS	
> Extremely fast		> Stale concept	
> Huge twisty levels		> Graphically average	
> Fun multiplayer		> Not enough tuning options	
> Great sound design		> Repetitive after a while	

GRAPHICS > What graphics? Everything moves so fast!

6

SOUNDS > Actually work, making you feel you're there

8

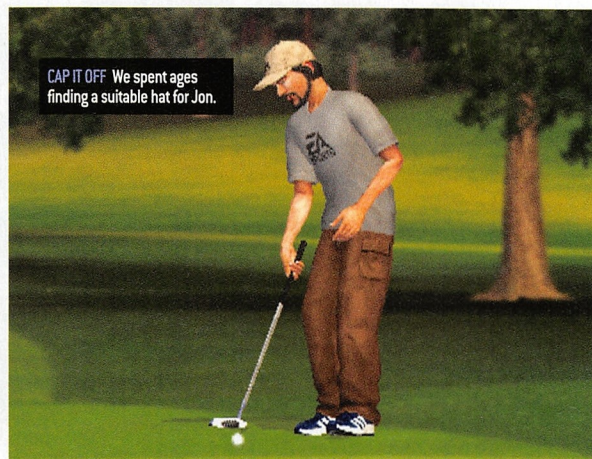
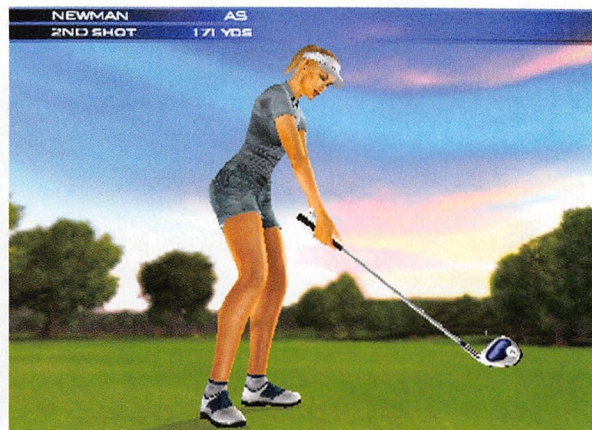
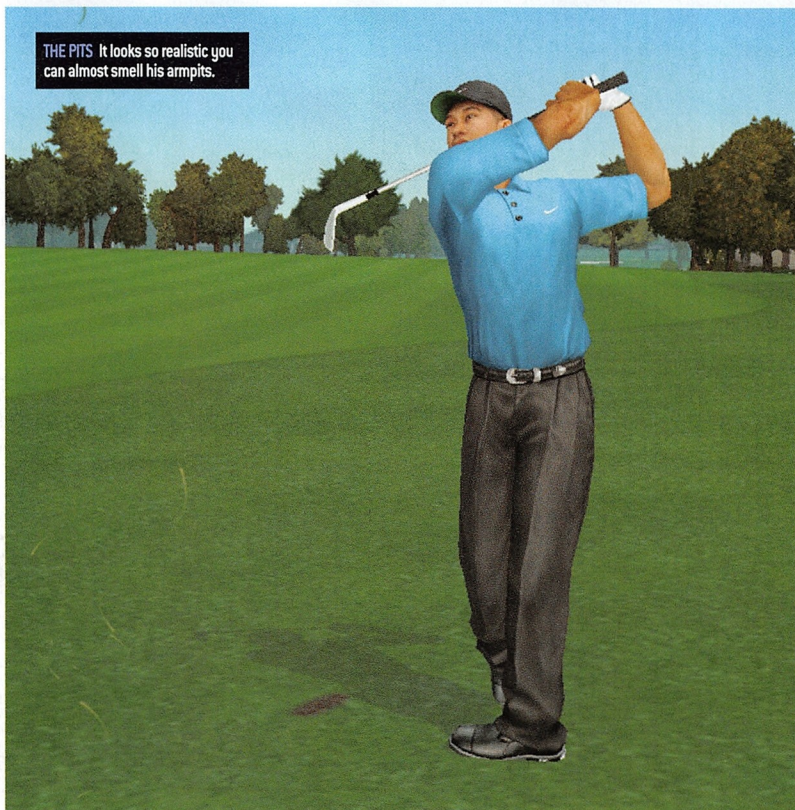
GAMEPLAY > Great... if you've never played one of these

7

OVERALL SCORE

If profits are used wisely, by 2080 Acclaim can build the real tracks, then we'll see how accurate these games really are. As speculative sci-fi racers go though, this is one of the best on PS2.

8



TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2004



LET'S GO CLUBBING. WAIT FOR IT... WAIT FOR IT... GOLF CLUBBING! THUS INDICATING THE ESSENTIAL TRENDINESS OF THE SPORT ITSELF, AND THE GAME. DO YOU SEE?

> TYPE	GOLF
> PLAYERS	1-4
> OUT	NOW
> PUBLISHER	ELECT. ARTS
> PRICE	\$99.95
> DEVELOPER	EA SPORTS
> ONLINE	NO

GOLF, YEAH? HIP-HOPPIN', TRU-STEPPIN', blingin' golf. Golf Tha golf. Innit? Well no it in't. Golf is still the preserve of the middle-aged, high-income white man, rather than the mad multicultural melee it's presented as here. The game even uses the phrase, "This ain't your daddy's game of golf!" at one point. Actually, they're right. This is your trying-to-be-hip older brother's golf. *TW2004* dispenses with all that plus-four-wearing, niblick-choosing bollocks and replaces it with something friendlier. And it works. In fact: *Tiger Woods 2004* will remain the best golf game in the world until *Tiger Woods 2005*, which will doubtless include crowd-surfing, breakdancing and scratching minigames.

Last year's *Tiger Woods* game was basically a complex experiment in taking golf out of the clubhouse and making it more accessible. This is more of a consolidation: taking what they've learned, polishing it up and generally having a good time with it. After getting more bogeys than the average three-year-old's nasal cavity and sitting in more sand than your average land-crab, we got the hang of it. The big thing is that instead of pressing a button at exactly the right time, you just have to pull an analog stick backwards and forwards smoothly. It works with a perfect mix of fluid control and subtle sensitivity... we'll stop sounding like a shampoo advert now.

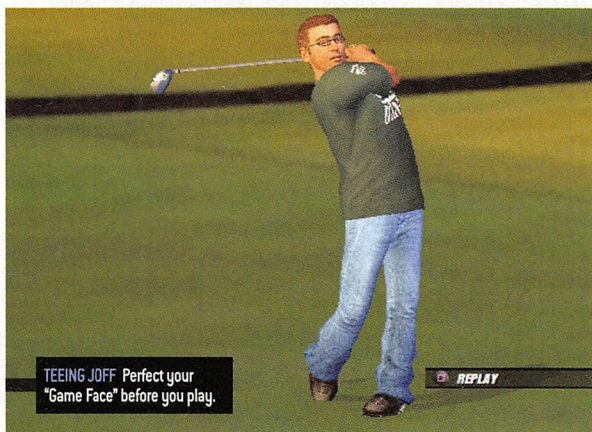
Before the game begins, you can waste hours getting your "Game Face" right by tweaking an immense amount of variables to put a digital simulacrum of your own ugly mug onto the fairway. Even your accessories can alter your game, adding everything from luck (the chance you have of getting out of the rough) to driving ability. It's a subtle touch of adventure game magic that's clever and unobtrusive. There was no way we couldn't spend a bit of time trying to get Joff-style specs to complete his cyber-puppet, or find the right cap for the ever-adorned Jon.

Although all the characters are well designed and animated, the real golfers are the ones who stand out. If you thought emotions like steely determination, doubt and quiet confidence were too subtle to be stuffed into a video game, you're about to be proved wrong. "You can almost smell the grass" is usually hauled out as an unthinking

cliché by the likes of us, but here the all-pervading atmosphere of the trees, lawns, fog and birdsong means you really will find your brain filling in the missing elements.

You want a downside? Annoyingly, the (usually excellent) commentators will tell you where they think the ball will land even when it's just started on its arc. Even more annoyingly, they're always, always right, which kind of takes the suspense out of the whole thing. And for some mad reason, EA has decided not to let you play online with the PAL version, even though the US version has people teeing off with each other all over the internet. It's our only sore point with *Tiger Woods 2004*. It might have stopped it getting 10/10, even. But everything else is sweet as pie with this accomplished sports title.

/ JOFF BROWN



PSW VERDICT

> UPPERS		> DOWNERS	
> Millions of game modes		> Some courses only look OK	
> Ultra-intuitive play		> Where's the online play, eh?	
> Put your face in the game		> Commentators too accurate	
> Deep as it is wide		> It's still only golf	
GRAPHICS	> Naturalistic and funky, gorgeous courses		9
SOUNDS	> Dullish tunes, excellent commentary		7
GAMEPLAY	> This game will never wear out		10

OVERALL SCORE
Don't like golf? You just haven't played *Tiger Woods 2004*. With a few friends or on your own, this is a weekend-eating slice of some of the best virtual sports action in history. Own it.

9



BARBEQUED ARACHNID Well it's more nutritious than a Pot Noodle.



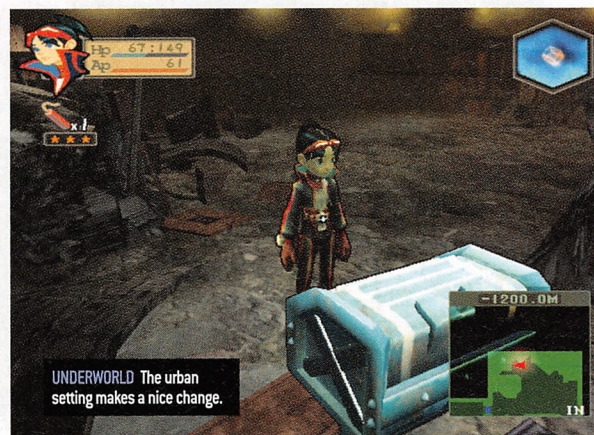
HOG WASH The groundhog game-play eventually gets too much.



DÉJÀ VU Hang on a minute... haven't we already done this bit?



MUST... SAVE... PRINCESS... Surely there's an easier way?



UNDERWORLD The urban setting makes a nice change.

BREATH OF FIRE: DRAGON QUARTER

PART FINAL FANTASY, PART GROUNDHOG DAY... IT'S THAT CONFUSING!



> TYPE	ADVENTURE
> PLAYERS	1
> OUT	NOW
> PUBLISHER	CAPCOM
> PRICE	\$99.95
> DEVELOPER	CAPCOM
> ONLINE	NO

IF YOU'VE NEVER HEARD OF THE BREATH OF FIRE games before, don't worry. We won't think any less of you. After all, there is a certain, "beardness" about adventure games that make most PS2 gamer's toes curl up like slugs in a salt bath. But just so you know, they're a poor man's *Final Fantasy*, which means if you like *Final Fantasy* and you're happy to do your role-playing games "spendthrift" style, you'll probably get a decent amount of fun out of *Dragon Quarter*.

But while this is undeniably classic, text-book console adventuring (the good old menu-driven combat sequences are testament to that) *Dragon Quarter* does at least try to do things a bit differently. You'll know what to expect, but you might be surprised by the way it all happens.

Let's take the story as an example: Traditional wide-eyed Japanese cartoon characters? You better believe it. A cocky partner and a beautiful

princess on the run? Oh yes. Medieval villages and drafty stone castles? Er, not quite, because, while *Dragon Quarter* boasts the twee characters we've come to expect from Japanese adventure games, the setting is anything but, revolving instead around a small community of people hidden deep below the planet's surface. Think *Matrix Reloaded's* Zion, only without all the ravers and pointless Laurence Fishburne monologues and you'll have some idea of what to expect. It gives *Dragon Quarter* a nice, gritty urban feel that's helped by the electro-pop soundtrack.

Lengthwise though, it's short, clocking in at a measly (relatively speaking for this genre) 10 hours or so, and that's where *Dragon Quarter* goes really screwy, because despite boasting the shortest plot in adventure gaming history, it's still going to take you a good 40-odd hours to properly see the end of it.

The reason? *Dragon Quarter* has been specifically designed to be played through over and over again, and not in an "Ooh, I've unlocked a new costume!" way either. This is full-on, properly difficult gaming and even taking into account the fact that, unlike *Final Fantasy*, you can see and interact with the monsters well before you head into battle with them, the truth is you're going to be doing an awful lot of dying. So much so, in fact, that it would be easy to turn off and give up after the first half hour.

Stick with it though and you'll be treated to a unique, *Groundhog Day*-style experience in

which each new game offers a subtly different experience by way of ever new cut-scenes and dungeons to explore. And since every time you restart you begin with all your skills and equipment intact, whipping through the early sections becomes something of a formality.

But do we really want to go over the same ground over and over again? By the time you've seen everything you'll have played the game through six or seven times, and that doesn't seem quite right to us. Don't get us wrong, it's a good story, if slightly predictable, but it's not worth seeing that many times. And that's why *Dragon Quarter*, despite being a good game, just doesn't yank our chain. A pity really, because it tried so hard to be different.

/ MARK ROBINS



HAVEN'T WE MET BEFORE? The repetitions become labourious.

PS2 VERDICT		
<div> <div>UPPERS</div> <div> > Innovative gameplay > No random encounters > Cute visuals > Nice and brief (in theory) </div> </div>		
<div> <div>DOWNERS</div> <div> > Repetitive nature > Not very novice-friendly > Complicated battle system > Too "Japanese" for some </div> </div>		
GRAPHICS	> Nice cartoon look, but won't appeal to all	6
SOUNDS	> Cool mix of funk and orchestral music	7
GAMEPLAY	> Unique system, but it becomes repetitive	6
OVERALL SCORE Credit to Capcom for trying something a bit different with the genre, and <i>Dragon Quarter</i> is likely to be a firm favourite with some, but it's just a bit too different in places for us.		6



ALTER ECHO

A CLEARLY INSANE 1970S SCI-FI STORY, A MAN WHO MORPHS INTO A ROBOT AND AN ALIEN WITH A DEEP VOICE WHO LETS YOU WALK AROUND IN ITS BRAIN.

> TYPE	ACTION ADVENTURE
> PLAYERS	1
> OUT	NOW
> PUBLISHER	THQ
> PRICE	\$99.95
> DEVELOPER	OUTRAGE

WE DIDN'T PAY MUCH ATTENTION TO ALTER Echo. We had no idea what it was about, what it was going to be like or what the story was. We didn't know who you played or anything. It could've even been a role-playing game for all we knew (thank God it wasn't). It was an enigma. We now know lots about it, but still don't really understand what it's about. It's science fiction, and like all of the best sci-fi stories, you never really know what's happening or who that man with the deep voice is.

What we do know is this. You're in the year 2850. People have developed psychic powers and can shape their surroundings using a substance called Plast. Plast is like a mental plasticine that clever people can make change shape at will. But, and here's where the story gets even more insane than the last series of Dallas, a new Plast has been discovered by a mad scientist. Then, because this is a game and no one ever has to explain how or why stuff happens, the new ultra-powerful EchoPlast comes alive and decides its evil controller/father must be stopped.

So you're abducted, thrown into a mighty-morphing EchoPlast suit and left running around a system of internal organs while the sentient Plast-monster pleads for your help and gives you weapon advice. It's insane.

But that's why we quite like *Alter Echo*. Something's always happening. The levels are short, action packed, very well linked into each other and you're always spoonfed information as

to exactly what you're supposed to do next. It's very simple, and there's no chance of you getting lost. You're told what to shoot, how to shoot it and what to do as soon as it's dead. The game has a pace like no other, and even the intestinal training mission – which takes a whopping 45 minutes – is a right laugh. By the time the training story links into the actual game you're climbing walls, morphing into a robot, stealth-killing enemies with your tongue and pulling off combo attacks the ferocity of which you've never before encountered.

Oh, and you can control time too. The small yellow bar there beneath your energy reading is your time-dilation gauge. Fill it up by collecting yellow orbs enemies leave behind, click that secret button beneath the right analogue stick (it took us three years before we noticed that button existed) and your time-warp mini game pops up. Here, via the medium of coloured tiles, you kill enemies by moving an arrow around in right-angled fashion. It would take three paragraphs to explain fully, so let's just say it's a ridiculously fast little puzzle game thing that lasts for ten seconds, tops. Link up a few enemy blocks and your man freezes time, emerges into some sort of hyperspace altered reality background and knifes the enemies to death with one hit. This is mad. It is clearly mad.

Then you're back to standard fighting, which is crazy fast, enemies everywhere, you morphing into a giant robot and gunning things down every second. This body-changing idea is superbly well

done. There you are, in human form, pressing the circle button to uppercute enemies into the air. Now, as they're flying upwards, you morph into the robot and use your gun to suspend them in the sky with a hail of bullet fire like they're a plastic carrier bag caught in a breeze.

Alter Echo is an insane, crazy, ludicrous and simple sci-fi shooter, one that comes with an equally high concept and laughably epic story line. We should hate it, but it's so slickly packaged into short, bombastic chunks of action, it's actually one of the most impulsive games we've played for ages. Maybe we've just got a bit over-excited by all the big lasers and echoey-voiced alien entities, but even so, *Alter Echo* gets our heart pumping like it hasn't since we last broke into a jog back in the summer of '97.

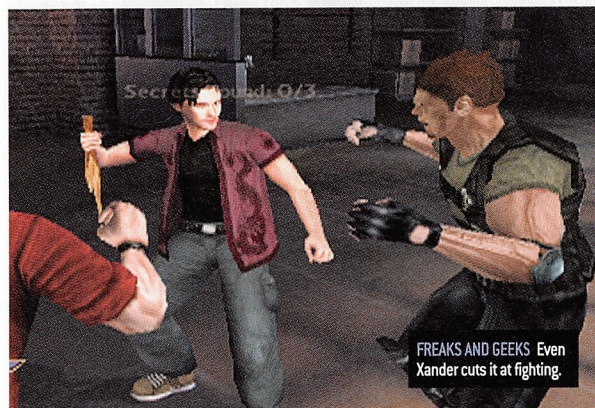
/ GARY CUTLACK

PSW VERDICT

> UPBERS		> DOWNERS
> Great morphing-man action		> Dull pastel landscapes
> Nice space techno music		> Over too quickly
> A pantomime-in-space story		> Quite simple to play
> Exceptionally mental		> Exceptionally mental
GRAPHICS	> All a bit grey, but pleasingly smooth	7
SOUNDS	> Bouncy space-house and great voice acting	8
GAMEPLAY	> The only trouble is that it's a bit too easy	7

OVERALL SCORE
It's packed with action, special action that's been fortified with extra action that has added action in it. A mental story, great sci-fi atmosphere and you can morph into a robot. We say 'super'.

7



BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER: CHAOS BLEEDS

STOP YOUR WEEPING, CHILDREN. SUNNYDALE'S FINEST HAVE RETURNED FOR ONE LAST PS2 ADVENTURE. THERE. IS THAT BETTER?

> TYPE	ACTION ADVENTURE
> PLAYERS	1-4
> OUT	NOVEMBER
> PUBLISHER	VIVENDI
> PRICE	\$99.95
> DEVELOPER	EUROCOM
> ONLINE	NO

YOU JUST CAN'T CONVINCE SOME FOLKS.

While loads of people cottoned on to the Buffy thing at some point in the show's lifetime, a lot more wanted nothing to do with something so slavered over by all the geekiest guys and gals in the land. Shame, really, because the show was more about sharp dialogue, great characters and warm comedy than vampire lore. Turning all that into a game may never be possible, until we get our brains beamed directly into the TV, but this is a smart action game with a respectable amount of demon-bashing.

The game's structured like a 'lost episode' from second half of season five, which, for those keeping count, means Spike's uneasily on Buffy's side, bad slayer Faith is in jail (although she breaks out of prison for a guest appearance), Tara and Willow are in lurve, and so are ex-demon Anya and geek Xander. A great time to set a new adventure, but in practise you'll be wandering around graveyards, factories and the like, mostly as the Buffster, with cut-scenes providing welcome breaks from the slightly tiresome puzzles.

Four multiplayer games provide a surprisingly decent diversion – we liked the bunny catching mode – but the main story's as straightforward, one-time-play-only as they come. It's worth it just for the quips, references and downright decent voice acting of most of the folks involved, although it's sometimes odd to see the voices coming out of these indifferently animated pixel-

puppets. Well, one character actually is a puppet – Sid the ventriloquist's dummy from the first series, making an utterly random appearance. You can play as him, too. Woo freakin' hoo, says us.

Taking its cues from last year's Xbox title, the real stars of *Chaos Bleeds* are the fights – which is just how it should be in an action game. The genius concept for the vampire battles comes straight from the show: vamps can be beaten up as much as you like, but to kill them you're going to need to stake them. Try pushing Mr Pointy through them without softening them up first, and they'll dodge it with ease. Once they're on the ground, a quick press of L1 whips out your stake and shoves it through their cold hearts, resulting in an expensive-looking 'turn to dust' effect.

It's one of the most satisfying ways to fight, although it's an unusually easy ride for Buffy and her cronies. You'd expect that playing normal-powered nerd Xander Harris would result in a swift death, but even he can whack vampires furiously. Willow and Tara get a lot more martial magic (because you can't defeat vamps with crystals, however glowy and pure they might be) and punk-talking good/bad vampire Spike is far too dull to control. He also looks like 80s TV star Max Headroom here, which surely can't be right.

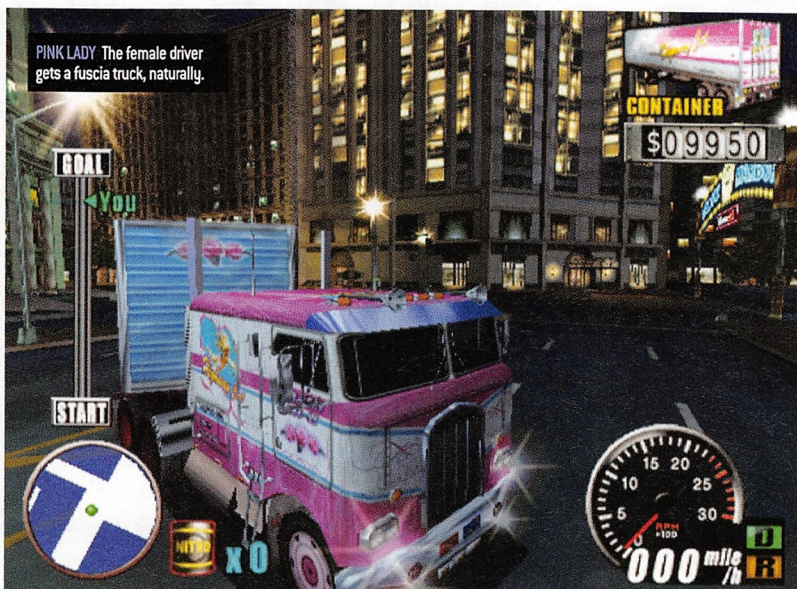
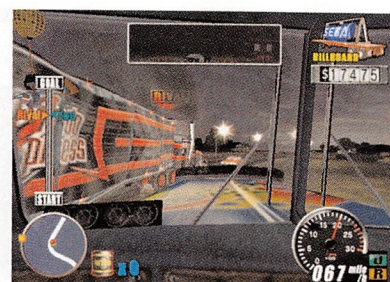
We said there's a respectable amount of real star voices, but Sarah Michelle Gellar doesn't

voice Buffy. You'll seriously never notice, though; her voice double is uncannily good. Alyson Hannigan, who plays the loveable fluffy witch Willow in the show, was also far too concerned with making films about pies and weddings to come into a studio and record the script. So we get someone doing a Willow impression instead, which sounds more like a stoned Drew Barrymore being played at about 16rpm.

Still, you can't have it all, and aside from the slightly 'made for TV' quality of everything here, *Chaos Bleeds* is a worthy rendition of the show's more action-y parts. But what sort of compliment is 'worthy', anyway?

/ JOFF BROWN

PSW VERDICT		
<div> <div> UPPERS </div> <div> Play as five Scoobies Just like a <i>Buffy</i> episode Fighting's mostly fun Multiplayer actually works </div> </div>		
<div> <div> DOWNERS </div> <div> We need more cast voices Scrappy round the edges Puzzles can infuriate Won't impress all fans </div> </div>		
GRAPHICS	Decent fight animation, odd characters	7
SOUNDS	Great all-round dialogue, effects and music	8
GAMEPLAY	Multiplayer helps, but it's, like, sooo linear	6
OVERALL SCORE We can't help feeling there was more to be done here, but <i>Chaos Bleeds</i> is a competent action title with some nice touches. Never quite aims for the A-list quality of the actual show, though.		
		7



KING OF ROUTE 66

SEGA THINKS MERE CARS ARE FOR THE WEAK. AND REALISM, TOO. AND THE PRESERVATION OF THE DEFENCELESS. OH DEAR.

> TYPE	DRIVING
> PLAYERS	1-2
> OUT	NOVEMBER
> PUBLISHER	SEGA
> PRICE	\$99.95
> DEVELOPER	SEGA
> ONLINE	NO

IF YOU THOUGHT *TIMESPLITTERS 2* WAS violent, if you tutted at *Grand Theft Auto 3* for being a bit too gory, then stay away from this innocuous-looking arcade game. Because why, you ask illiterately? Because in *King of Route 66*, you'll cause more death and material damage than in *Max Payne* and *Medal of Honor* put together. Smash into cars and they'll fly hilariously off into the distance, before exploding into the sides of skyscrapers. Crash through entire buildings, run people over... do anything to get where you're going. *King of Route 66* bears only the slightest relation to real life. And that's if you already live in Texas and drive a gas-slurping behemoth to work every day... which you don't.



Although you'll be driving at speed, *66* isn't a straight forward racing game. It's mission-based, with you taking on rival drivers to deliver packages across the US. When "King of Route 66" gets boring, you can also give "Queen of Route 66" a try. It's a mode which sees you bombing around cities picking up various items, and it's a lot harder than it sounds. Finally, there's a Challenge mode, in which you'll have to wreak even more destruction on hapless vehicles, including a variation on golf, of all things, where you smash into a single car and see how far you can get it. They're mildly diverting, but they're no substitute for a deeper main mode.

At least the game doesn't look too ugly. Like *Silent Hill* – only absolutely nothing even slightly like *Silent Hill* – this is a Japanese dream of US culture. But instead of horror movies, this vision is mainlined through *Smokey and the Bandit* via Las Vegas kitsch and trailer-trash glamour. For instance, the stereotyped drivers are so awful that if they don't set your teeth on edge, they'll make you laugh out loud. There's the Cowboy, the Lady (pink truck, obviously), the Native American (complete with feather in hair) etc. Most embarrassingly there's the Soul Man, sporting the regulation afro and 70s stylings.

What really lets *66* down is the one thing that we thought would impress us: the gameplay itself. The problem is, because these are trucks you're driving around, the handling on them is naturally terrible. Even though you're travelling at supersonic speeds and smashing through walls

like they were made of crêpe paper, the fantasy style doesn't extend to actually allowing you to wrench these monsters around the tracks. This isn't great as the default difficulty level is set pretty high, and your rivals seem to obey a completely different set of rules to you. Even if you boost ahead with your nitro, the rival trucks can overtake before you slow down again. What every race comes down to is finding the perfect route through the (rather short) courses to reach the goal seconds before the evil drivers do.

So if you were expecting another *Crazy Taxi*, you'll be sorely disappointed. Sega can do a lot better than this. They just don't seem to be trying anymore. Give us another *Daytona*, *Sega Rally* or *Sonic*. Because frankly you can stick your truck driving games up your exhaust pipe. Sideways. / JOFF BROWN

PSW VERDICT

> UPBERS		> DOWNERS
> Zany as all hell		> Handling's awful
> Hilariously stupid		> Stupid stereotypes
> Bright and glamorous		> Hard as nails
> Good minigames		> Shallow main mode
GRAPHICS	> Neon kitsch and arcadey looks	6
SOUNDS	> Arcadey wailings that hurt the ears	5
GAMEPLAY	> Not half as fun as it should be	5
OVERALL SCORE		5
King of Route 66 is a blast for a while, and its Career mode's more sophisticated than you'd think, but unless you're a Sega/big truck/demolition fan, you'd do well to avoid.		



NHL 2004

NHL 2004, FEATURING A NEW AND IMPROVED INTERIOR DECORATING ENGINE. YOU THINK WE'RE KIDDING?

> TYPE	SPORTS
> PLAYERS	1-4
> OUT	NOW
> PUBLISHER	ELECT. ARTS
> PRICE	\$99.95
> DEVELOPER	EA SPORTS
> ONLINE	YES

THIS IS FAR MORE LIKE IT. OK SO WE DON'T always understand what's going on, and yes, there are times where we struggle to see the puck, but at least it's fast and friendly and a little bit like football. If you squint. And tilt your head to one side.

NHL 2004 differs from NHL 2003 in that it's now possible to direct the fists and elbows of your player with the right analogue stick while controlling the remainder of his body with the left. EA is very big on this kind of thing at the moment, what with the off-the-ball thing in FIFA 2004 and the Playmaker system in the new Madden. We applaud the general principle of being given greater control over our sportsmen,

but fiddling with both sticks simultaneously takes some getting used to. Is it worth taking the time out to master the dual-stick system just to improve the physical side of your hockey? Sort of. Body checks are more accurate and it's easier to trigger fights, but you can get by with the standard controls if it all gets too much.

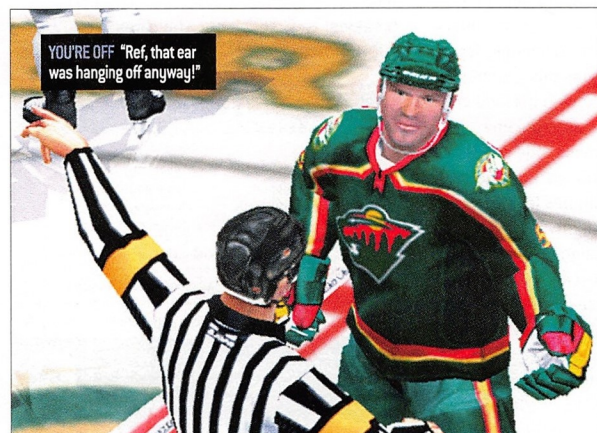
The scraps are, of course, an integral part of the game, ice hockey being a sport played by individuals with tempers that erupt like volcanic boils at the slightest provocation. When you've finished raining down a heavy shower of clenched fists onto the mushy face of your opponent, it's now possible to pull their shirt over their head before slugging them full flush in the guts. Take that you temporarily blinded replica of an American professional sportsman we've never heard of! You can't buy satisfaction like that. Not off the shelf at least.

To keep you interested in the long-term, Electronic Arts has strengthened the Dynasty mode (Career mode to you and me) with the addition of a light element of role-play. Winning matches leads to bigger crowds, bigger crowds lead to improved profit margins, improved profit margins lead to your superiors smiling and shaking your hand. They reward you with experience points to be spent on (get this) items of furniture for your office. Hate the wallpaper? Stick three past the New Jersey Devils and replace it with something more suited to your tastes. Don't like the carpet? Keep a clean sheet when you play the Boston Bruins and have it

taken up. It's probably best to save a few points for other stuff, like training facilities that actually improve the stats of your team, but we won't worry you with that now. It's an original idea, one that, in common with all original ideas, straddles the thin dividing line between "really good" and "really crap".

In line with the rest of the EA Sports roster, NHL 2004 is fully compatible with the Broadband adapter. As is so often the case, with the game yet to be put on general release it's hard to say for certain how effective the online play will be. At the time of writing, NHL opponents looking for a game are extremely thin on the ground, so tread cautiously if internet play is a priority. We won't be able to vouch for its pedigree until we're actually playing multiplayer online.

/ JON BROWN



PSW VERDICT

> UPBERS	> DOWNERS
> Dynasty mode's great	> Where's the puck?
> Matches are energetic	> Buying furniture is for girls
> Fighting is improved	> Seriously, where's the puck?
> Online is a definite bonus	> Fights do get boring

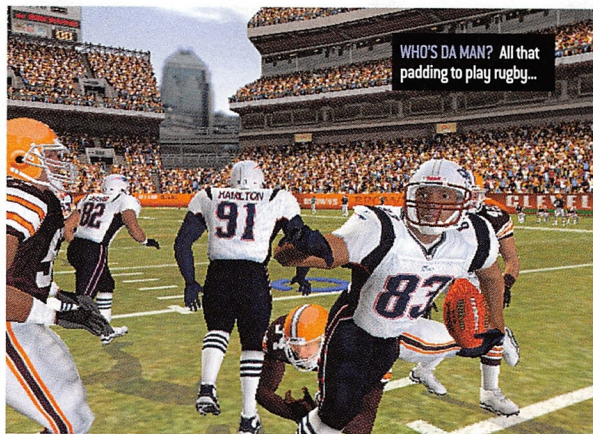
GRAPHICS > Everything you want from an EA sports title **8**

SOUNDS > Cock-rock soundtrack adds the scent of man **7**

GAMEPLAY > A decent Career mode, full online support **8**

OVERALL SCORE
Sporting parverts tired of high tackles, behinds and Ray 'Rabs' Warren might want to give NHL 2004 a go. If FIFA 2004 is as inventive as this, Pro Evolution 3 has work to do.

8



MADDEN NFL 2004

DON'T GET MADDEN, GET EVEN. PSW LOSES IT RAG WITH AMERICAN FOOTBALL GAMES ONCE AND FOR ALL.

> TYPE	SPORTS
> PLAYERS	1-4
> OUT	NOW
> PUBLISHER	ELECT. ARTS
> PRICE	\$99.95
> DEVELOPER	EA SPORTS
> ONLINE	YES

AT WHAT POINT DID YOU STOP CARING ABOUT American football games? We'll be honest with you, we were never all that bothered about them in the first place. Ditto baseball games. Ice hockey we can stomach, mainly because it's like five-a-side destruction derby in fast-forward, but the rest we can gladly do without. This reviewer in particular is tired to the death of tip-toeing through reviews of American sports games, worrying that his lack of understanding of the discipline in question excludes him from giving the game a good pasting, so here goes: American football is a rubbish sport, *Madden 2004* is an average game. With too many rules. And far too many buttons.

Mercifully, this year's edition comes with a full set of tutorials to gently lower the soft-skinned newcomer into the boiling vat of jagged diagrams, pointy arrows and slippery jargon that no American sports game would be complete without. John Madden is also on hand to drip-feed you with advised tactics during breaks in the game, meaning you no longer have to play roulette with the playbook every time your team looks to you for leadership. Sadly even these tips assume a degree of knowledge beyond that of your average PSW writer. It's nice they made the effort and everything, but it's still incredibly hard for those not readily familiar with the sport.

The big talking point for this year's edition is inclusion of Playmaker control, a system that allows you to issue orders to your ball receivers using the right analogue stick. Apparently for high-fiving Yankee sports types this is nothing short of "awesome". For us here in the land of Vegemite, sheilas and Bananas in pyjamas, it's nothing short of nothing. It made little difference to our playing experience, though it did mean we had to spend another ten minutes learning stuff.

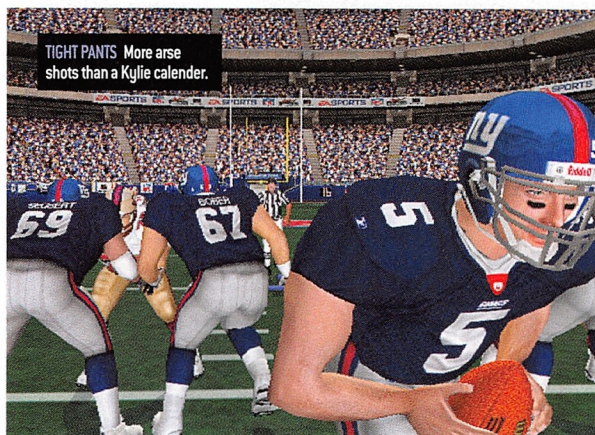
We can't argue with the graphics. The game looks lovely (insofar as the sight of writhing fat men in leggings and helmets can be considered lovely) and the pre-match presentation is plush to an almost sickening degree. All of which made us warm to *Madden 2004* somewhat, forcing us to add a couple of marks onto the score for technical merit alone. We're suckers for solid, well-animated characters, even if they are being

forced to partake in a sport that drags worse than Marlon Brando encased in carbonite.

Other new stuff: the full online support, which allows you to take part in online tournaments and talk to fellow players using the USB headset, the improved Career mode, and the stadium builder, which we liked because it didn't involve either quarterbacks or the Green Bay Packers.

So there it is. The best American football game available for PS2? Unquestionably. But that doesn't mean you should buy it. We didn't enjoy playing *Madden 2004*, and that's just as much a reflection of our feelings for the sport as it is our opinion of this particular conversion. Electronic Arts has achieved its aims handsomely, of that there is no question, but then so did I after breakfast - job's done but who cares?

/ JON BROWN



PSW VERDICT

> UPPERS	> DOWNERS
> Looks great.	> Too many rules
> Sturdy online support	> Too many stoppages
> Career mode adds depth	> Too many buttons
> Tutorials are fairly helpful	> Too many diagrams

GRAPHICS > Hulking players and high-shine presentation 8

SOUNDS > Grunts, groans and commentary. No good 5

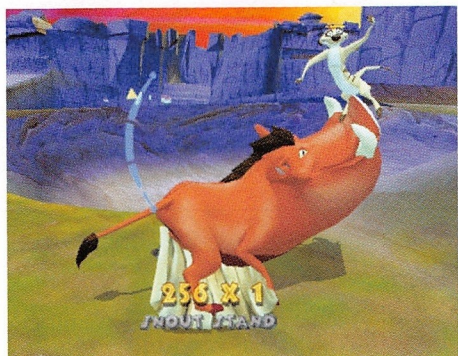
GAMEPLAY > You'll struggle to notice any difference 5

OVERALL SCORE
Technically impressive with a heart of pure stone, *Madden 2004* is a solid title we find very hard to like. Let's face it, you don't care either way. Yank sports games are too bitty for Aussies.

6

MINI REVIEWS

THREE SMALL BUT RELATIVELY FORMED PLAYSTATION2 TITLES.



DISNEY'S EXTREME SKATE ADVENTURE

PERFORM A TWINKY WINKY TRUNK REVERSAL AS DISNEY HITS THE DECKS.

> TYPE	SPORTS
> PLAYERS	1-2
> OUT	NOW
> PUBLISHER	ACTIVISION
> PRICE	\$99.95
> DEVELOPER	VICARIOUS VISIONS
> ONLINE	NO

SCENE ONE: THE ACTIVISION BOARDROOM. WE'RE midway through a meeting to discuss game ideas for their 2003 range. After half an hour of arguing over *Star Wars: Ewok Bingo* we come to Mr Morgan Basic, a Brylcreem and Burberry marketing guy who hasn't had time to prepare any notes. He was up all night with the children. Somebody else's. His mind lurching sickeningly from the cocaine and brandy breakfast sitting awkwardly on his stomach, he splutters out the first thing that comes to mind. "Er, *Tony Hawk* goes to Disneyland?"

And so six months later a PSW reviewer is handed a copy of *Disney's Extreme Skate Adventure*, a remarkably inoffensive caricature of Mr Hawk's venerable *Pro Skater* series. This being a kid's game, the *Tony* control system has been massively simplified, rubberised in thick waterproof casing to make it suitable for the small of paw. Aficionados will no doubt balk at the ease of which you can pull of manuals and combos, but people who put their exact age in years and months at the end of everything they write will love it. And let's face it, it's about time they caught a break. We get pubs, fags and violence, they get early nights, clipped ears and forced into *Wallace and Gromit*-branded clothing. So we're relieved to report that *Extreme Skate Adventure* is nowhere near as bad as it should be. In fact, it's really quite entertaining. The ten environments are bright and pleasant, while we welcomed the refreshingly undemanding gameplay like a bible scholar would an episode of *Tom and Jerry* after fifteen years of reading Deuteronomy. Perfect for small, crying people.

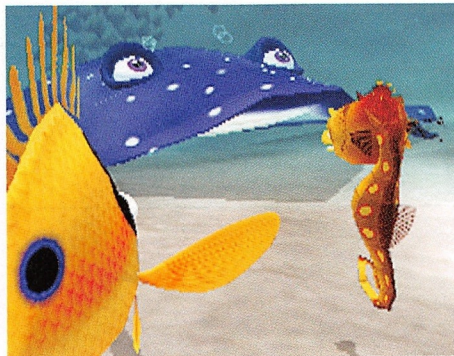
/ JON BROWN

PSW VERDICT

OVERALL SCORE

That rarest of things: a kid's game that doesn't suck. The chances are you're too old and too good at games for this, but the mentally disadvantaged will love it.

7



FINDING NEMO

"CLAMS ARE STUPID," SAYS THE STAR OF FINDING NEMO. WE AGREE.

> TYPE	ACTION
> PLAYERS	1
> OUT	NOW
> PUBLISHER	THQ
> PRICE	\$99.95
> DEVELOPER	TRAVELLER'S TALES
> ONLINE	NO

ALL CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF TEN ARE IMBECILES.

You only need scan their drawings to realise that. Look at mummy's hands. They're completely rubbish. Just two circles with four (not even five) spikes sticking out of them. And how is anyone supposed to get into that house? The front door is smaller than the chimney pot, which is floating three inches above the roof, by the way. So if you're thinking of buying your son/daughter/younger brother/sister a PS2 game this month and like the look of *Finding Nemo*, bear in mind that you'll most probably be required to play it yourself at some stage. Because, as much as we hate to admit it, in certain places we actually found it a fairly tricky.

If little Timmy does tug on your trouser leg to ask you for help and you can't get past the third level, just mumble something about the lack of an option to invert the Y-axis and hand the joypad back huffily. For not only is this a perfectly valid excuse (if there is a dead goldfish floating mouth agape at the surface of Nemo's glass bowl, it's the one named "Control Interface"), it'll also confuse the child, therefore reasserting the fact that you're more intelligent. Which you'll need to do for the sake of your ego after failing a game designed to occupy the tiny minds of idiots who struggle to match farm animals with the noises they make. No wonder they're still at school.

A decent-sized package of fun then. It looks as pretty and as busy as you'd expect it to; the levels are sweet and charming. Which it that rarest of things: a movie tie-in aimed squarely at kids that doesn't stink worse than a lumberjack's toilet brush.

/ JON BROWN

PSW VERDICT

OVERALL SCORE

Be warned: if your kids are really stupid, go with something a little easier. Otherwise, *Finding Nemo* is as likable as we'd imagine the movie is. We haven't seen it.

7

PLATINUM



KINGDOM HEARTS

THE MAGICAL KINGDOM MEETS THE KINGDOM OF MAGIC.

> TYPE	ADVENTURE
> PLAYERS	1
> OUT	NOW
> PUBLISHER	SONY
> PRICE	\$49.95
> DEVELOPER	SQUARE ENIX
> ONLINE	NO

IT SOUNDS LIKE THE STRANGEST IDEA FOR A VIDEO

game since Hideo Kojima once said, "No, it'll be brilliant see — instead of getting into fights, the hero of the game'll run away and hide," but somehow, it actually does work. A selection of Disney's most famous cartoon characters go head to head with the sword and magic-wielding protagonists of Square's phenomenally popular *Final Fantasy* games and the end result is one of the most mind-boggling titles ever.

The Disney influence might be strong (for example, you'll get to travel through classic Disney movies, as well as meeting every Disney character ever stolen, from the Cheshire Cat to the Little Mermaid), but *Kingdom Hearts* is anything but a children's game. Jiminy Cricket may be your Journal Keeper, admittedly, but there's a lengthy, convoluted and, at times, deeply unsettling story to plough your way through here.

The gameplay itself is an interesting mix of platform hopping, action-based combat and complicated character development à la *Final Fantasy*, which, combined with three-dimensional recreations of Goofy and Donald Duck so good you'll forget they were ever flat cartoon characters, all adds up to a thoroughly entertaining game. But for all its brilliance, it still struggles in places thanks to some poorly thought out mini-games (Chip 'n' Dale's — yes! *The Chip 'n' Dale!* — rocket building game being an example) and the worst camera of any PS2 game ever. Overlook these faults, however, and you've got yourself a very special bit of adventure gaming. That's the magic of Disney for you.

/ MARK ROBINS

PSW VERDICT

OVERALL SCORE

It's like Disney and *Final Fantasy* both stepped into that machine from *The Fly* and this is what fell out afterwards. Weird, and at times frustrating, but utterly enchanting.

8

GROUP TEST

RALLYING

WE TAKE OUR DRIVING GAMES LIKE WE TAKE OUR GIRLS – DIRTY AND WITH CURVES THAT COULD KILL THE INEXPERIENCED. BUT WHICH OF THE PS2'S THREE LEADING RALLY GAMES SHOULD WIN THE RACE FOR YOUR WALLET?



COLIN MCRAE RALLY 04

>> REVIEWED IN ISSUE 15

>> ORIGINAL QUOTE:

"Liking McRae 04 is akin to thinking Michelangelo sculptures are OK."



WORLD RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP II: EXTREME

>> REVIEWED IN ISSUE 7

>> ORIGINAL QUOTE:

"It'll push your driving ability to limits... stands shoulder to shoulder with GT3."



V-RALLY 3

>> REVIEWED IN ISSUE 2

>> ORIGINAL QUOTE:

"When it shines, it really shines, and we'll take that over uniform OK-ness any day."



ALL THE WORLD'S A STAGE *Colin McRae Rally 04* (right) has the best selection of stages in terms of design. *WRCII* (bottom left) looks great but maybe lacks depth. *V-Rally 3* (bottom right) is out of its depth.



PSW HAS LONG BEEN THE SPIRITUAL HOME OF THE rally game. We're not bullshitting when we say that we understand this particular genre better than any of the collection of idiots, morons and dunderbrains we've been cruelly forced to share this withering planet with. A quick flick through our back issues will show you as much. At one 'stage' (see how our undying love of the rally game means we can't help but litter this delightfully playful preamble with a series of hilarious driving puns?) an image of a shit-flecked Ford Focus was as much a part of our cover furniture as the barcode, the exclamation mark and the word 'exclusive'. With this in mind, it's no great surprise that you find yourself confronted with an 'exhaust-ive' group test that compares the three leading (head)lights in this particular field. *Colin McRae 04* versus *V-Rally 3* versus *World Rally Championship II Extreme* (known from here on in as *WRCII*). Gentlemen, start your

engines. Oh, and Colin, be a love and give them a couple of hours head start. We want a relatively close race after all.

"MY BABY HANDLES LIKE A SKINNY PIG IN A LUKEWARM BATH OF A STRAWBERRY-FLAVOURED BREAST MILK."

Having been on quite a few press trips courtesy of various well-meaning, but ultimately death-dealing video games companies, we do actually know what it's like to be spun round in a rally car across the tundra while a grinning Scandinavian driver whose breath smells like Absolut vodka coolly adjusts his helmet. Here's what it's like: no matter how mad they drive or how close to the edge of the ravine you come, you never feel out of control in the slightest. And that's what we demand from our games, too. When the car, the track and the physics are all man-made, there's absolutely no excuse for getting the

handling wrong. You hear us, *V-Rally 3* developer Eden Studios? No excuses. The dog ate your small intestine? So what? You still could've improved on the distinctly wonky handling from the previous *V-Rally* titles. You've let yourself down, you've let us down and you've let our readers down. Third place.

WRCII is next. *WRC* the first suffered terribly from oversteer, an extreme sensitivity that left the driver in constant fear that their slightest touch would send the car quivering across the road and into ditches. This really was a serious pain in the arse. Like being hit on said arse with a paintball. Thankfully they sorted this for the sequel by using *Colin McRae* as their model and by delivering a far more solid and reliable system. The result elicited a turtle's head of joy from the PSW rectum.

Good, but not good enough. Because despite this, *WRCII* still gives away plenty in terms of the handling >



BREAK THE MOULD The damage in *Colin McRae 04* (above) looks nice; the damage in *WRCII* (far right) looks nicer. All of which leaves *V-Rally 3* languishing in last place. Yet again.

RAW DATA

	COLIN 04	V-RALLY 3	WRC2
Number of game modes	08	03	11
Varieties of countries	08	05	14
Number of stages	52	30	115
Number of Cars	20	25	07



to *Colin McRae Rally 04*. Fundamental changes made to the way the car physics work allow a greater level of control than ever before. Apparently it's something to do with the number of pivots per car. We're not entirely sure. Someone did tell us once, but we switched off after 30 seconds and started imagining Annalise Braakensiek trampolining topless to the popular roller-skating anthem *Popcorn* by Hot Butter. Now that's what we call erotic. The important thing here is that the powersliding is more satisfying and more intuitive than ever before. That's why *Colin McRae 04* completes the handling stage a full two-minutes ahead of its closest rival.

**"DOES IT HAVE A COKE CAN HOLDER?
I'VE ALWAYS WANTED ONE OF THOSE."**

In terms of the car lists, it all comes down to personal preference. Which do your prize more highly: accuracy or excitement? Do you want to drive real cars around real circuits that real people are sitting in now, or do you want to drive vintage cars so dangerous that actual humans aren't allowed in them any more? If it's realism and authenticity you're after, you have to go with *WRCII*. With just seven official vehicles and a few more that need to be unlocked, it may not be the game with the busiest garage, but it is the only one of the three that can claim to truly represent the actual vehicles of modern rallying. If, on the other hand, it's excitement and razzle-dazzle you're after, go with *Colin McRae 04*, which features classic cars that handle like shotguns and kill can like bullets. *PSW's* preference is for *Colin 04*. We just can't stay away from that Audi Sport Quattro. No sir.

What? What about *V-Rally 3*? Hmm. It's OK. More cars than either *McRae* or *WRCII*, but the motors on the forecourt lack the snap, crackle and growl of those found elsewhere.

**"IF I SEE ANOTHER HOT AIR BALLOON OR A
WINDMILL I'M TELLING YOU NOW I'M GOING TO UNDO MY
SEATBELT AND DRIVE US BOTH INTO A TREE."**

Like so many of the categories, this particular one,

dealing with the courses, is a two-horse race. The third horse, a nag named *V-Rally 3*, pulls up lame, tired and fed up after the first fence. It has an advantage over the others in that various animals can often be seen wandering across the track, but as it's impossible to mow them down no matter how fast you drive, they serve absolutely no purpose whatsoever. As lifelong carnivores, grown men who use sausages for toothbrushes, lard for toothpaste, lambs blood for mouthwash and gristle for dental floss, we're forced to ask the people behind *V-Rally 3* what the point in having animals is if you can't hurt them? They don't reply. And not only because we don't actually ask them. But because they're stupid and because they don't know why.

And then there were two. We like *WRCII's* selection of stages, particularly Monte Carlo, with its mountain curves and its astonishing views, and Spain, where long, straight roads unfold like the legs of calendar girls, inviting you to squeeze your accelerator pedal until the engine pitches to a squeal that only dogs and aliens can hear. We have healthy respect for *Colin McRae 04* in this regard too, which has a marvellous range of climates and colour schemes, from the whiter-than-white snow stages of Scandinavia to the splendiferous greenery of the densely wooded backwater routes of the United Kingdom.

The outright winner? *Colin McRae 04*. Again. We know. It's so one-sided it's in danger of getting boring, but we can't help it. The latest *McRae* just is that much better than the competition. Its circuits – a canny blend of classic routes plundered from the series' velvet-lined back-catalogue and all new creations – are devilish yet rewarding, pipping *WRCII's* equivalents to the finish line by a nose. What do they look like? That's not what this section's about. You'll have to wait until you get to the

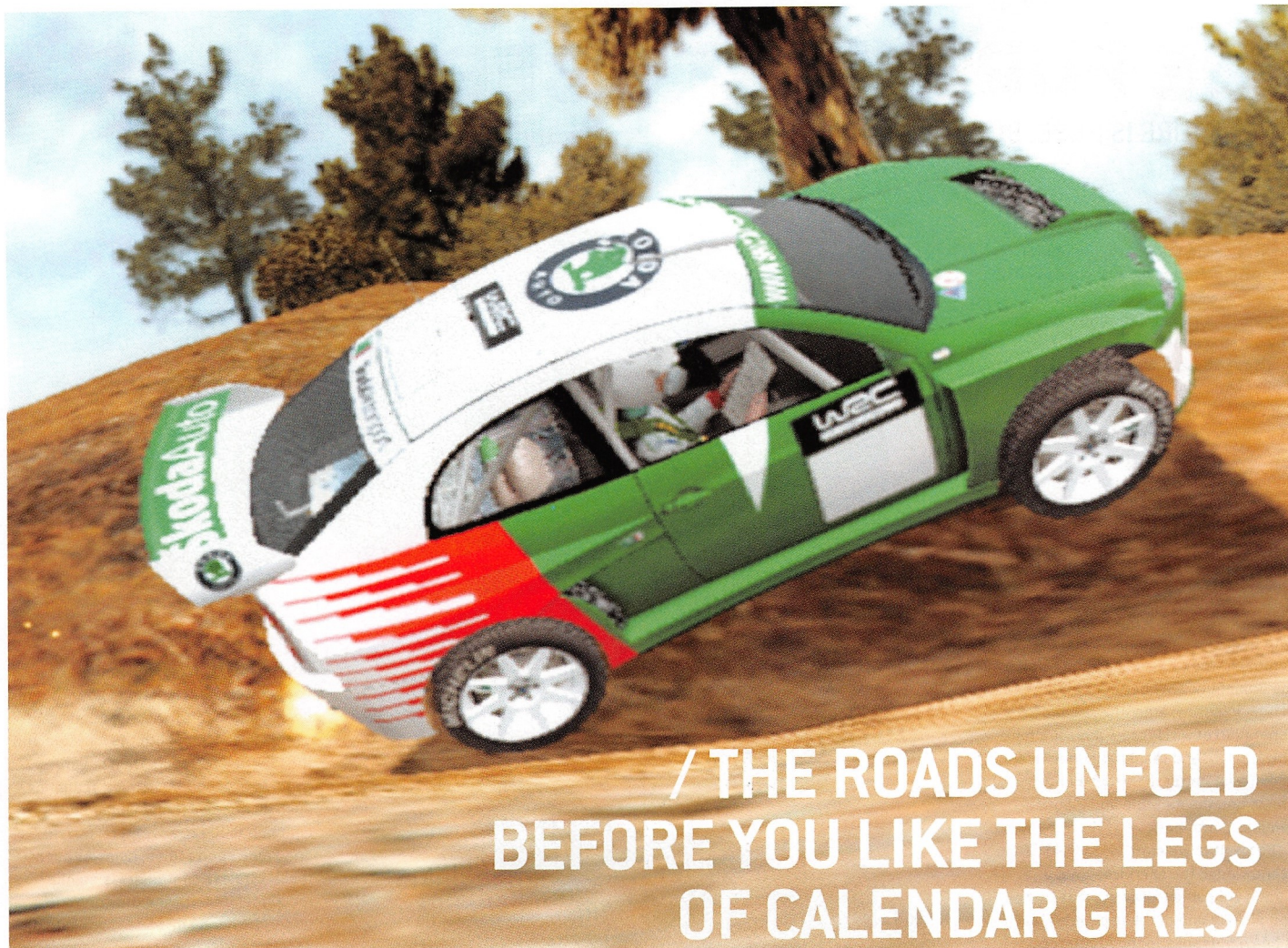
graphics section, conveniently placed directly below where your eyes are now.

**"SINGLE GAMER SEEKS GOOD-LOOKING RALLY
GAME FOR TOPLESS CUDDLING. PERSONALITY NOT
IMPORTANT. MUST HAVE OWN GRAVEL."**

Overall you'd be hard pressed to find a better-looking trio of games than the three we've roped in for this month's Group Test. So full marks to everyone in the looks department, even *V-Rally 3*, which as the oldest game

THE BEST BITS

	COLIN MCRÆ RALLY 04 The superb new car handling, which takes you closer to the sensation of driving a real rally car without making things too complicated.
	WRCII EXTREME The damage. Probably not quite as technically accurate as <i>Colin 04</i> but far more fun to look at. Hurting yourself has never been so much fun.
	V-RALLY 3 The career mode. If you're sick of dull championships with dry Finns and nutty Scots, your heart will find its place here. It just screams "play on!"



/ THE ROADS UNFOLD BEFORE YOU LIKE THE LEGS OF CALENDAR GIRLS/

here we thought would look kind of dated. But even that shines brighter than an Impreza's headlights on full beam, with detailed and imaginative tracks and decent dust and sunlight effects. Sure, the car models themselves can't stand up to the mighty competition, but that's only because the standard of the other two games is so high.

WRCII's cars look so real you'd be forgiven for flinching as they're plough towards you in the Replay mode. A level of *Gran Turismo*-style polish means that every surface gleams and shimmers just like it should, and that

individual carparts – like the brake discs – can be spotted by those who know what they're looking for.

Colin McRae 04 goes one better than *WRCII*. Not only is it the finest of the three in terms of the car models – check out those dashboards – but in terms of the course furniture, the overall presentation and the all-important replays. Another first for Colin then, because there's something about its painstaking feel, even though it's not as initially stunning, that just adds to the solidity and overall realism of it all.

"TELL YOU WHAT. WHY DON'T WE JUST TAKE OUT THE ENGINE, THE STEREO AND THE AIR-FRESHENER AND PUSH IT OFF A CLIFF?"

The damage category. We enjoyed this bit. Those of you who've ever tried crossing the finish line with three tyres blown, your spoiler swinging in the breeze and your bonnet rolled up like an umbrella will know exactly why.

Each of the three titles has a distinctly different approach when it comes to handling the stuff that happens to the bonnet when you attempt to drive through trees and walls. You could argue that *WRCII* relies on graphical trickery to get the job done, whereas with *Colin 04* the entire cars – not just the bits you can see – have been modelled, meaning when parts break off they accurately affect the handling. Both of these provide a natural contrast with *V-Rally 3*, which, as you might expect, is far simpler both graphically and in terms of how the damage accrued impacts on the game.

So which is better? Well, they're all different. Different is good. *Sesame Street* taught us that. At the danger of getting into Bert and Ernie's bad books, we're going to go with *WRCII*, purely because the scratches and dents in this title look the nicest.

"I THINK I ALREADY KNOW THE ANSWER TO THIS, BUT WHICH GAME SHOULD I BUY?"

No surprises here then. One of the major reasons we gave *Colin 04* a massive nine out of ten in our exclusive review last month was because it made every rally game we'd played up to that point look distinctly inferior. First place for Team Codemasters is hence the inevitable outcome, the developer that understands the driving genre better than anyone on the planet standing with champagne in hand, happiness smeared across its face like wet Norwegian mud. Second spot goes to *WRCII*, which always impresses but perhaps lacks the depth and the sheen of the latest McRae title. That said, with a third instalment on the way (p.60) promising more of the same only better, the Flying Scotsman's reign as the king of the PS2 could be brief.

V-Rally 3 splutters home in last place. By no means a disgrace, it's saved by its genre-leading career mode, as Jackson suggested in last's issue's editorial. Only really worth considering if you've tried the alternatives and found them both to be too big for your childlike mitts to hold. It really is aging rather drastically though.

/ JOFF BROWN

THE WORST BITS



COLIN MCRAE RALLY 04

Very occasionally prone to slowing down. Amazingly enough that's the biggest flaw we can find. And we've been looking.



WRCII EXTREME

The lack of cars. We like the fact that all the motors are from the official competition, we don't like the fact that there's so few of them.



V-RALLY 3

The handling. The improvements we were promised over the previous version never came to fruition, leaving part three a little flat.

WINNER

Colin McRae 04 raises the bar in terms of rallying titles to a daunting new high that rival developers are sure to find hard to match. So if you've had enough of Formula One, if you don't fancy *WRCII*, if you're done with *Gran Turismo 3* and if you're tired of waiting for *Gran Turismo 4*, give Colin a spin. It's the biggest, freshest, fastest and most challenging rally title on PlayStation2.

THE PURSUIT OF LIBERTY

THE FUTURE IS HERE. BUT AT WHAT COST?

LAST YEAR PSW WITNESSED ONE OF THE great farces in third-party peripheral manufacture. The Logitech wireless PS2 controller was an abomination in design. Its albatrossian wingspan, wart-like button cluster, Britneyesque analogue sticks (you know, they're loose) and gargantuan weight made it the office laughing stock. Even looking at it now, we can't help but chuckle. Its one saving grace was its lack of cord, enabling trouble-free paperweight usage. Gaming though? Not a chance.

It wouldn't have been so disappointing had we not harboured such hopes for the radio frequency wireless revolution. We'd seen Nintendo pull off an outstanding cordless product with their Wavebird, and we were confused when it became apparent that the GameCube was better than the PS2 in one, if narrow, area. The second generation of wireless RF pads are here now though, and thankfully, they're a hell of a lot better. PSW this month brings you the Air Style and Playfree wireless controllers.

But, before we start, we should acknowledge the sacrifices you, as a gamer, are going to have to make when you pick up one of these puppies. Each is heavier, thanks to their batteries, than a regular Dual Shock 2. Also, it must be recognised that they are marginally less responsive than your Dual Shock 2 – sometimes offering a slight delay, sometimes struggling with rapid successions of presses. But, perhaps most important for the modern gamer, is the price you'll have to pay to get your hands on freedom. At \$90 each, both the Playfree and the Air Style are significantly more (that is, \$30) expensive than your standard Dual Shock 2. But, these are still quality products. Is either worthwhile for you as a gamer? Read on, my son/daughter!

FOUNTECH'S AIR STYLE

The Air Style may be a third-party peripheral, but by golly gosh does it want to be an official Sony product. Barring the big blue panel and its triggers (which are slightly imprecise), the Air Style feels almost identical to the Dual Shock 2, even with its raised D-pad. The sticks have a familiar feel as well. And what about the dongle!? A cool blue light signifies a received signal (even if it might get annoying during a dark DVD-watching session).

4GAMERS' PLAYFREE

The Playfree, meanwhile, is like the slim girl at school. Her skin feels great, thanks to a waxy "Soft Touch" feel. Yet her buttons are undersized and sharp-



AIR STYLE Look at that futuristic blue. Wow!



PLAYFREE It feels so smooth. Soft Touch yeah!

edged, her triggers too raised and small, while the D-pad a little bit all over the place. And to hold, despite feeling smooth, the Playfree just doesn't feel like it was designed with human hands in mind – too many ridges and bumps. Meanwhile, the sticks' resistance levels require getting used to. Sure, it's class above the Logitech disaster, but perhaps not quite as nice as the Air Style.

CONCLUSION

So is it time to dispose of the old Dual Shock 2? Definitely not yet. While using a wireless control is simply a joy, and, for the majority, perhaps the best overall control option, dedicated gamers simply can't go past the consistent, reliable control that the DS2 provides. Beyond the marginal delay of button presses, we had problems with each unit that can only be explained as 'control inconsistencies'. And trust us, when you're within an inch of defeating

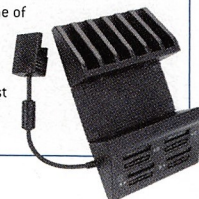
Inferno in Soul Calibur 2 on the extra hard setting, that last thing you want to discover is 'control inconsistencies'.

However, when both the Air Style and the Playfree are good, they're very good. In appropriate gaming scenarios, such as non-twitch gameplay styles common to RPGs, adventure, puzzle and some sports titles, using either of these wireless controllers is highly recommended. Having the controller under the doona in a late-night gaming session is just one of the classic opportunities this variety of peripheral makes possible. No cold arms any more! We cannot emphasise how natural this cord-free gaming feels.

But, then you consider price, battery consumption (if it matters, 2 x AA for the Air Style, 4 x AAA for the Playfree), and the minor, but still present, control shortcomings, and it's difficult to unequivocally recommend. Certainly, they have their place, but they suffer a little bit from the inconsistencies common to new technology. Fortunately, the advantages are impossible to ignore. Buy one and you will feel cool, as if you're truly part of the future. You'll just have to work out how not to lose it.

WIN!

If you'd like to experience the wireless revolution yourself, thanks to Bluemouth Interactive and Mercantile Pacific we've got two splendid competitions offering you the chance to sample these products yourself. Just turn to page 27 and enter away. In the Playfree prize package, there's also a terrific multitap/vertical stand included. While we didn't have room in the issue to check it out this month, we can definitely say that it's one of the most logically innovative peripherals we've seen. Multiplayer fans must take a look. Expect a full playtest soon.



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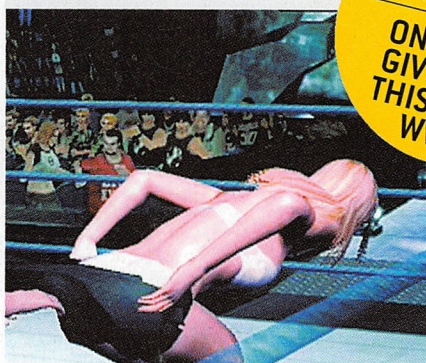
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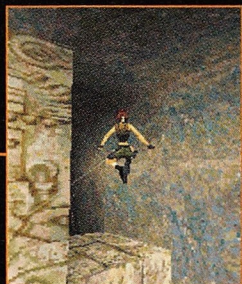


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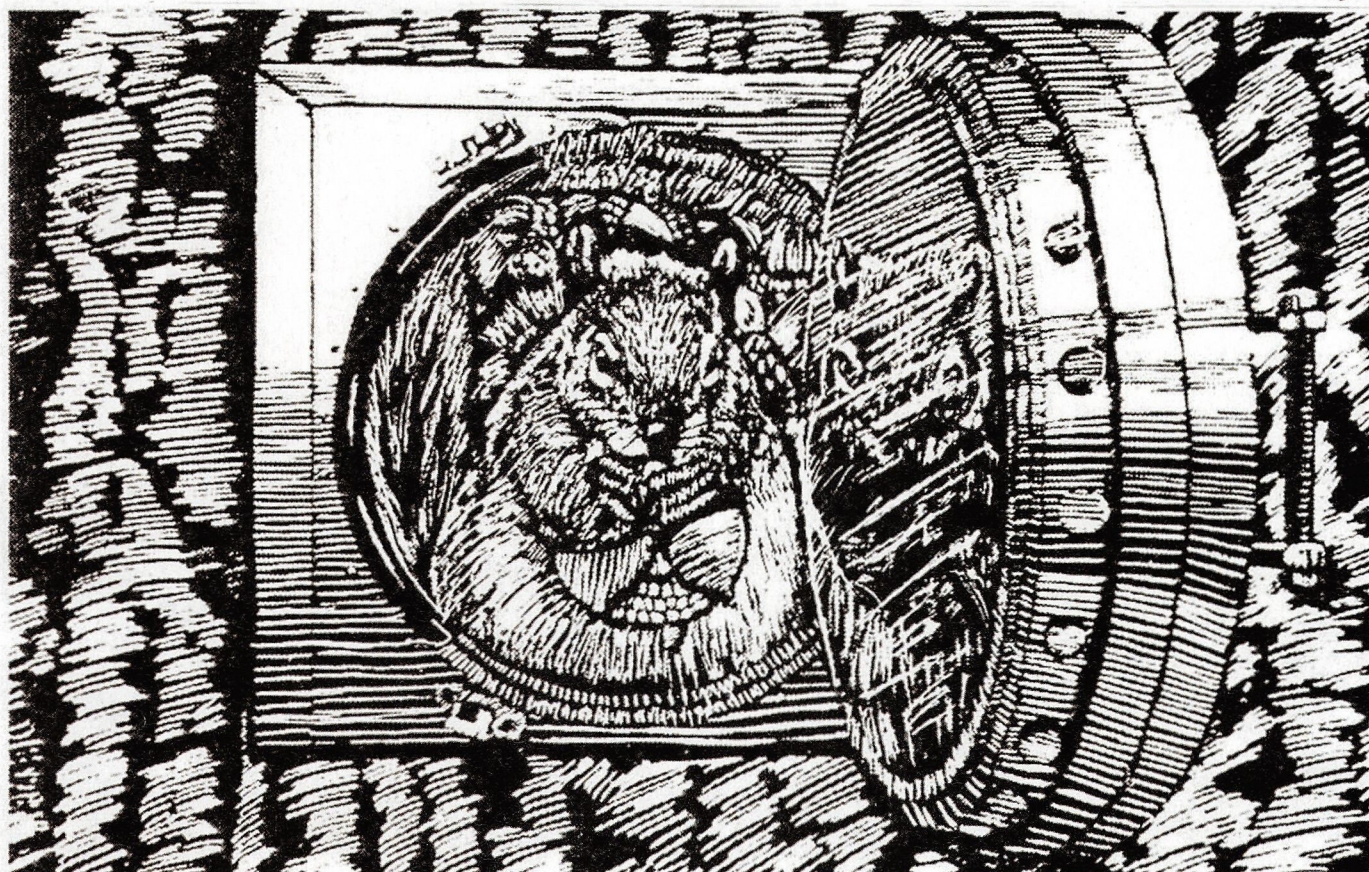
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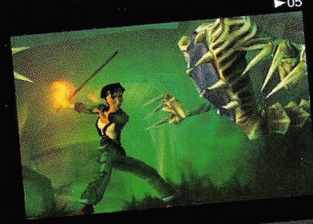
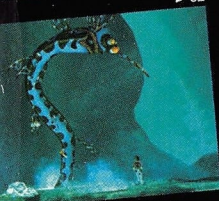
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- DIDD: WHITE FLAG 11455
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- CHRISTINA: CANT HOLD US DOWN 11227
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- SEAN PAUL: GET BUSY 11283
- EMINEM: BUSINESS 11291
- 50 Cent: In Da Club 11141
- 50 Cent: 21 Questions 11282
- Evanescence: Going Under 11458
- Evanescence: Bring Me To Life 11091
- Beyonce: Crazy In Love 11357
- Benny Benassi: Satisfaction 11442
- Justin Timberlake: Senorita 11453
- Pink: Feel Good Time 11358
- Snoop Dogg: Beautiful 11216
- Snoop Dogg: Aint No Fun 11461
- Busta Rhymes: I Know What U... 11336
- Stacie Orrico: Stuck 11232
- Christina Aguilera: Fighter 11240
- Jewel: Intuition 11386
- Thicke: When I Get You Alone 11398
- Beyonce: Baby Boy 11463
- Pharrell W/Jay-Z: Frontin 11462
- Justin.T.: Rock Your Body 11286
- B2K/P.Diddy/BumpBumpBump 10998
- Kelly: Miss Independent 11436
- J.Lo/LLCoolJ: All I Have 11134
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- DMX: Gonna Give It To Ya 11292

#1 LORD OF THE RINGS 10986

RECENT HITS

NELLY: DILEMMA 10846
JENNY FROM THE BLOCK 10881
DJ SAMMY: HEAVEN 10705
CHRISTINAAGUILERA: DIRTY 10872
JA RULE: MESMERISE 10954
2PAC: CALIFORNIA LOVE 10679
DR DRE: NEXT EPISODE 10696
DELTA: LOST WITHOUT YOU 11163
SHAGGY: HEY SEXY LADY 10869
GOD DCHARLOTTE: ANTHEM 11132
L.PARKS: SOMEWHERE I BELONG 11179
BIG YELLOW TAXI 11009
XZIBIT: MULTIPLY 10955

EMINEM

WITHOUT ME 10633
8 MILE 10907
STAN 10447
SUPERMAN 10667
LOSE YOURSELF 10912
SING FOR THE MOMENT 10666
CLEANING OUT MY CLOSET 10662
THE REAL SLIM SHADY 10398
NEW! BUSINESS 11291
ENTER SANDMAN 10154
FADE TO BLACK 11149
UNFORGIVEN 10546
ST ANGER 11439

PURE CLASSICS

BLISTER IN THE SUN 10069
CHISEL: KHE SANH 10286
ACDC: HELL'S BELLS 11069
ACDC: THUNDERSTRUCK 10531
ACDC: BACK IN BLACK 11064
ENTER SANDMAN 10154
BROWN EYED GIRL 10082
SMOKE ON THE WATER 10435
I WAS MADE FOR LOVING U 10248
HOTEL CALIFORNIA (SOLO) 10237
KEVIN B.WILSON: STICK THAT PHONE 10458
L/KERNAUGHAN: OUTBACK CLUB 11306
G&R: SWEET CHILD OF MINE 10475

CATCHY TUNES

TEQUILLA 10488
I COULD WALK 500 MILES 10513
SMOOTH CRIMINAL 10436
THE WIGGLES: HOT POTATO 11022
THE LOGICAL SONG 10727
THE KETCHUP SONG 10834
BLINK 182: DAMMIT 10117
SHAGGY: ANGEL 10037
THE WAY YOU MAKE ME FEEL 11111
DIXIE CHICKS: LANDSLIDE 11219
AVRIL LAVIGNE: SK8ER BOI 10845
SALT 'N' PEPPA: PUSH IT 10771
LETS TALK ABOUT SEX 10300

TV THEMES

THE SIMPSONS 10516
SOPRANOS 11221
RUBBER DUCKY 10414
CHARLIES ANGELS 10094
SEX & THE CITY 10424
BENNY HILL 10058
THE SMURFS 10517
THE MUPPETS 10346
THE THUNDERBIRDS 10530
MANAMANA (MUPPETS) 11231
SCOOBY DOO 10420
I DREAM OF JEANNIE 10644
BAKERS DELIGHT AD 10786

FILM THEMES

EYE OF THE TIGER 10163
MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 10338
ACT A FOOL (2F2FURIOUS) 11325
JACKASS INTRO 11058
JACKASS: WE WANT FUN 11062
LORD OF THE RINGS 10986
BOND (TRADITIONAL) 10278
BEVERLY HILLS COP 10061
THE GODFATHER 10503
PINK PANTHER 10382
STAR WARS 10452
HARRY POTTER 10221
TERMINATOR THEME 10489

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For assistance phone 1800 886 288 or support@mobilemojo.com

Polyphonic Tones

POPULAR

B/BENASSI: SATISFACTION 50094
R.KELLY: IGNITION 50085
SEAN PAUL: GET BUSY 50081
WHERE IS THE LOVE 50074
50CENT: IN DA CLUB 50006
50CENT: 21 QUESTIONS 50084
EMINEM: BUSINESS 50087
EMINEM: SUPERMAN 50059
EMINEM: WITHOUT ME 50041
BEYONCE: CRAZY IN LOVE 50057
SHAKE YA TAILFEATHER 50130
EVANESCENCE: GOING UNDER 50132
BRING ME TO LIFE 50066
JUSTIN T/LAKE: SENORITA 51611
PINK: FEEL GOOD TIME 50070
I KNOW WHAT YOU WANT 50068
AMANDA PEREZ: ANGEL 50125
CHINGY: RIGHT THURR 51920
JA RULE: REIGN 51829

HIT PICKS

DIDD: WHITE FLAG 51616
XFINA: CANT HOLD US DOWN 51619
SNOOP DOGG: BEAUTIFUL 50019
COLDPLAY: CLOCKS 50005
J.LO: ALL I HAVE 50000
EMINEM: LOSE YOURSELF 50007
B2K: BUMP BUMP BUMP 50020
DELTA G: INNOCENT EYES 51536
DELTA G: LOST WITHOUT YOU 50021
DJ SAMMY: HEAVEN 50099
NELLY: DILEMMA 50050
BIG BROVAZ: NU FLOW 50017
BOMFUNKMC: FREESTYLER 50039
SMOOTH CRIMINAL 50038
CHISEL: KHE SANH 50030
METALLICA: ST ANGER 50067
ELVIS: RUBBER NECKIN' 51874
KUNG FU FIGHTING 50153
PRODIGY: MINDFIELD 51092
LINKIN PARK: NUMB 51863

HOT TONES

BLISTER IN THE SUN 50027
EYE OF THE TIGER 50031
ACDC: THUNDERSTRUCK 50026
ENTER SANDMAN 50049
SALT 'N' PEPPA: PUSH IT 50028
HERB ALBERT: TEQUILA 50134
SWEET CHILD OF MINE 50046
MOUSSE T: HORNY 50891

THEMES

LORD OF THE RINGS 50065
THE SIMPSONS 50033
SEX & THE CITY 50032
BUFFY THEME 50118
JACKASS THEME 50114
STAR WARS 50053
STAR WARS - BAR SCENE 50071
MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 50051
BEVERLY HILLS COP 50054

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Devilish 30072
You are DROPPING DEAD 30072
gorgeous 30072
Am I dead yet? 30072
Horny 30072
my heart is yours 30072
How you doing? 30072
don't mess with me 30072
USE THE FORCE 30072
Talk To The Hand 30072
thinking of you 30072
HA, HA 30072

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